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THE SALMON RIVERS  
OF  
SCOTLAND

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*VOLUME IV.*



# THE SALMON RIVERS OF SCOTLAND

BY  
AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

MEMBER OF

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*VOLUME IV.*

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TO

OUR PREMIER ANGLER,

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF YORK.













# TABLE OF REFERENCE

## VOLUME I.

Alness,	Loch,	Kinloch,
Benedale,	Fleet,	Kirkaig,
Borge,	Fersa,	Langwell,
Bura,	Halladale,	Laxford,
Canon,	Helmisdale,	Naver,
Caulley,	Hope,	Oykel,
Donald,	Inver,	Shan,
Dunleath,	Inchard,	Thurso,

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Car,	Eck, South,	Nell,
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Der,	Eschar,	Spey and Trils,
Deveron,	Fishhorn,	Ugie,
Dou,	Kinglass,	Ythan,
	Leven,	

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Arnsdale,	Gramard, Big,	Oick,
Aylon,	Gramard, Little,	Polly,
Beaully and Trils,	Gueran,	Roy,
Brown,	Kanard,	Shiel of Loch Shiel,
Canon and Trils,	Kerry,	Shiel of L. Duich,
Canon of L. Canon,	Lochy,	Span,
Eve,	Moidart,	Torrilun,
Garry of L. Oich,	Moran,	Ullapool,
Garry, Upper,	Ness,	

## VOLUME IV.

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Anson,	Eck, Border,	Stinchaz,
Ayr,	Forth,	Tay and the Loch,
Cree,	Garry, Perthshire,	Triih,
Dee, Kirkcud,	Luce,	Tummel,
Doun,	Lyon,	Tweed and Trils,
Eura,	Nuh,	

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THE  
SALMON RIVERS OF SCOTLAND.

VOLUME IV.

CHAPTER I.

THE ADD, ARAY, DOUGLAS, FYNE,  
KINGLAS AND SHIRA.

THE ADD, Avon Fhada, or Long River, drains fifty square miles of highland country, and rising in some marshes at Craignure, in the parish of Glassary, after a winding run of about twenty miles, in which it traverses the Moss of Crinan, it falls into the sea at Inner Loch Crinan, not very far from the western entrance to the well-known canal. The upper waters belong to Mr. Thomas Lloyd, of Minard Castle, while the lower ones, going with Lord Malcolm's beautiful estate of Poltalloch, flow through a favourite tourist

district, and as the owner is well known for his genial good nature, he pays the penalty of his popularity by being so pestered with applications for leave to fish that he finds difficulty in keeping enough for his friends.

There are fully a score of bag nets working on either side of Loch Crinan mouth, while the shores of the inner loch, though pretty well looked after by the gamekeepers, are yet the favourite fishing grounds of the scringers of the district. The fish of the Add are not free risers, and there is never more than a portion of it in order, the rest being either too high or too low; also the tide affects the river a long way above the mouth. So dependent is it on everything being just right that in 1898, though there were plenty of fish, not a single one was got in September and October by Lord Malcolm or by any of his friends, for the river was up or down almost every hour, and never settled.

All the same, I can testify from happy experience

that the Add is a most fascinating river. No waders are wanted, pools of all sorts are in plenty, the casting is easy, and a light rod of fourteen feet will do all the work, while the scenery surrounding the big flat Moss of Crinan has a peculiar charm of its own.

Fish do not run until the beginning of June, while at times they are very much later, even deferring their arrival until the end of August. Nevertheless, the Add is opened by law on the 15th of February, from which date nets may work till the 31st of August and the rods until the 31st of October. It has always been a better river for grilse than for salmon, and in the old days has yielded some large takes of the former. In the nineteen years from 1857 to 1875, there were 480 salmon and 7,321 grilse taken by the rods, or an average of 28 salmon and 385 grilse each season. The former run about ten pounds and the latter five. The two best years in this period were those of 1858 and 1862, the earlier one giving 992 grilse

and 53 salmon, while the latter showed no less than 1,154 grilse and 55 salmon.

In 1862 an alteration unfavourable to the nets was made in the estuary, which is remarkable from its being the only case of the kind, as all other alterations have invariably been in their favour. Up to 1862 the Loch Crinan nets had averaged for the previous six years 47 salmon and 673 grilse; for the thirteen seasons following their mean take was 15 salmon and 255 grilse. The fly is the only lure used; Jock Scot, Blue Doctor, Thunder and Lightning, and other standard patterns all do well on the Add, if dressed on hooks from size one down to the very smallest.

The Aray, Douglas, Shira, Fyne and Kinglas are five small streams falling into Loch Fyne, each holding salmon and sea trout, which in former times were more plentiful than they are now—all of them pretty little streams to fish when in order. The three first belong to the Duke of Argyll, and are preserved. The Aray—or the Water of

Worship—has a swift run of about eight miles over a rocky bed, passing close to The Castle on



THE ARAY AND INVERARAY CASTLE.

its way to the sea. Three miles from the mouth there are a series of impassable falls, which it would not be worth while to ladder; therefore, angling is

confined from below these falls to the sea, and that at one time it „was pretty good will be gathered from the following anecdotes of David Edmestone, a whilom keeper at The Castle. They are narrated by Lord Archibald Campbell in his "Records of Argyll," and run as follows :—

"One of the most striking men about the place was the head gamekeeper in bygone days, who talked the very best 'Scotch'—Lowland Scotch! He ended his days in Fifeshire, but I am not certain that he came from that county. He always wore a very tall white hat, popularly called a chimney pot, also a high stick-up collar and neck-tie—the dress of the days of William IV. He had the finest set of teeth I ever saw, and as he was continually cracking jokes and laughing loudly at them, his teeth were always much seen. He had a ruddy healthy colour, dark eyes, and a hooked nose, and was generally a character whose sayings my father knew by heart and whose accent he had hit off.

"Dr. W. F. Cumming, commonly known as the 'Long Doctor,' had travelled with the Duke in Greece and other countries before my father married. The Doctor came to stay at Inverary, and was a well-known fisherman, and at one pool he and the Duke had each caught just the same number of fish. David Edmestone managed to attend to both fishermen, landing or gaffing the salmon as they were brought to bank. The Doctor fancied he saw some intentional carelessness in David's way of landing one of his salmon, and on the fish getting off, he turned and began with his well-known 'Gud, David, I believe you let that fish go on purpose!'

"Edmestone turned on the Doctor and said without a blush, 'G—d, Doctor! ye didna think I was going to let ye bate the Duke?'

"Greater loyalty to his chief could not have been more clearly shown by the most devoted Highlander.

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"David also saved Mrs. William Russell, a daughter of Lady Charlotte Bury, from being drowned in the Miller's Lynn. He was attending her when she was casting from a plank placed between two rocks; something went wrong,



THE MILLER'S LYNN

and in a second the lady was in the torrent. David could not swim, and it was only after repeated and desperate efforts that he managed to lay hold of her dress just as hope was almost gone."



The Aray and the Douglas can be fished by visitors at the Argyll Arms Hotel at Inverary.

The Shira has its course through a beautifully wooded glen, and falls into Loch Fyne, two miles to the north of the Aray, while a short distance from the sea it expands into the Dubh Loch, a pretty sheet of water, which also can be fished from the hotel, but the river itself the Duke keeps in his own hands. The Douglas falls into Loch Fyne, four miles to the south of Inverary, the salmon angling being limited to a mile, to where the bridge crosses, by some nearly impassable falls.\*

The Fyne and the Kinglas belong to Mr. Callender, of Ardkinglas, the former running into the head of the loch not far from Cairndow Inn. It is a larger and better river than either of the others, and holds many pretty streams and small

\* The death of the late Duke of Argyll, which occurred while this was being printed, may perhaps alter the fishing arrangements.

pools in the last six miles of its course; its chief tributary is the Red Burn, about half as large as the main stream. Up till about 1890 the Fyne used to yield to the sportsmen who rented it with the shootings an average bag each season of from fifty to one hundred salmon and grilse besides sea trout, which has been reduced somewhat through the incessant poaching by splash nets in Loch Fyne, helped by a bag net placed quite close to the mouth. The Kinglas has a run of about five miles, and can be fished by those staying at the Cairndow Inn, but sport is only to be had when it is just right.

These five Loch Fyne streams are all late ones, and though they open on the 16th of February, July, August, and September are the best months. A one-handed rod will cover them all, and small standard flies, such as Jock Scot, etc., are used.

CHAPTER II.  
THE ANNAN.

WITH a drainage area of three hundred and fifty square miles, unlike its near neighbour, the Esk, is entirely in Scotland. Rising in a range of high hills lying to the north of Moffat, on the borders of the counties of Lanark, Dumfries, and Peebles, with its source but a mile and a half from that of the Tweed, and only three and a half from that of the Clyde, it eventually falls into the Solway Firth about a mile below the town of Annan.

Its approximate total length is thirty-five miles, the upper waters flowing through a highland country, with the lower ones passing entirely through an agricultural district. On the way to the sea it receives—in addition to many smaller ones—half a dozen big tributaries: the Evan, Moffat, Kinnel,

Ae, Dryfe, and Milk, up which salmon and sea trout make their way late in the angling season.

The Annan is said to derive its name from an old Gaelic word meaning "slow flowing," but that certainly does not accurately describe the upper waters, as for the first fifteen miles of its course it is a swift, strong stream, which only begins to flow more quietly after passing Johnstone Bridge, at the end of the Rachills property.

According to the Fishery Board Reports, in 1862 the yearly value of the netting was £673, and that of the angling £111. In 1882 the former had increased to £1,720, and the latter to £177. Thus, while the nets had augmented their value by £1,047, the angling had only gained £66, which clearly demonstrated that the nets were getting an unfair share of the fish.

Some twenty miles from the mouth the Annan passes close by, but has no connection with, the Castle Loch of Loch Maben, which is noted for being, with one exception, the only Scotch loch

holding the vendace, a fish of the salmon family, but which never rises to a fly and is only caught by nets. It grows to about ten inches in length, has darkish fins, with greenish blue along the back and upper half of the body, with the sides and beneath silver white, dashed here and there with gold markings. These fish of this Castle Loch are netted for once a year, on the third Tuesday in July, by the Vendace Club of Dumfriesshire, the members dining together afterwards to consume their take, which is considered a great treat.

Although the Annan is free from pollutions, it suffers considerably from the various mill dams—or "caulds"—both on the main stream and on the tributaries. Of these obstructions there are fully fifteen, and though most of them are now made passable for running fish in times of water plenty, until that was properly done they formed almost insurmountable obstacles. The Brydekirk Cauld, situated on the Mount Annan water, owing to faulty construction at one time almost entirely stopped the

progress of the fish to the upper waters, but the evil was remedied in 1897, and now fish ascend it easily. In many cases the mill lades and mill wheels were not provided with protecting hecks, and thus numerous salmon were trapped in the lades, and myriads of fry were killed by the wheels. During the last three years, however, these evils have also been greatly reduced, and there are now only a few cases of unprotected lades and intakes.

The Annan is a late river, but, nevertheless, the law declares it open on the 25th of February, although fish do not put in an appearance even on the coasts until April. The nets ply up to the 10th of September, while the rods fish to the 15th of November; but it would be better for the river and the fish if netting ceased on the 31st of August and angling on the 31st of October, while, if the opening were also postponed until the 1st of April, the poor Annan might get a small chance of retrieving its reputation as a rod river. The numerous alterations that have already been made









Hudson Bridge





in the Annan close times are strong evidence that the ones most suitable for it have yet to be discovered.

The chief proprietors are Mr. J. J. Hope Johnstone, of Annandale and Rachills, Sir Robert Jardine, of Castlemilk, Mr. David Jardine, Mr. W. Younger, Lord Rollo and Dunning, Mr. A. J. Johnstone, of Halleaths, Mr. Brook, of Hoddon Castle, and Mr. W. D. Mackenzie, of Newbie and Farr.

For eight miles below Moffat the right bank belongs to Mr. Hope Johnstone, who, keeping in his own hands about a mile of both banks of the lowest part of his water, generously gives leave to the visitors and townspeople of Moffat to fish the remaining seven miles of this very pretty stretch: while on the opposite bank Sir Robert Jardine is equally liberal.

Many good reaches of the river can be fished on payment of small sums. The Duke of Buccleuch's anglings, together with parts of the Hoddon,

Newbie and Castlemilk waters, can be fished in this way. This latter stretch extends on the left bank for nearly three miles, from the Bech burn, a stream above Williamwalk Bridge, to the junction of the Milk: a water that is, perhaps, better for trout than for salmon, but yet there is a good chance of a fish any time when the river runs big after the nets are off. Good takes of herling may be made off it in July and August, especially by night fishing, which is not prohibited. On this stretch there are thirteen pools, viz., Ivy, Dungeon, Manse, Row Green, Buttress, Stag, Woodback, Shillholm Hass, Cauld Pool, Upper and Lower Crawford, Dillholm and Milkfoot. Wading trousers are necessary, and each of these pools will take about twenty minutes to fish properly.

Here are the terms on which licences to fish are granted on the Castlemilk waters, and they are much the same on the other reaches that are dealt with in a like manner:—

## NOTICE—RIVER ANNAN.

## CASTLEMILK AND DINWOODIE ESTATES.

Licences for Rod Fishing will be granted on certain conditions, and on the following terms, viz. :—

	CASTLEMILK WATER.	DINWOODIE WATER.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
For the Season . . . .	†2 0 0	1 0 0
From 1st March to 10th October .	1 0 0	0 10 0
From 1st March to 31st August .	0 10 0	0 5 0
From 1st September to 10th October	0 10 0	0 5 0
From 11th October to 15th November	†1 0 0	0 10 0
For one week from 1st March to 31st August . . . . .	0 2 0	0 1 0
For one week from 1st September to 10th October . . . . .	0 3 0	0 1 6
For one week from 11th October to 15th November . . . . .	†0 5 0	0 2 6

† N.B.—Exclusive of Brocklerig Water after 10th October.

The Licences will be issued on application to Mr. A. Chapman, Beeconhill, Lockerbie.

The Proprietor does not bind himself to grant Licences to every applicant.

The proceeds will be given towards charitable objects.

JOHN M. AITKEN,  
Norwood, Lockerbie.

Therefore, to the angler who does not wish to pay much for his sport the Annan offers a large extent of fairly good fishing. Naturally, where brown trout are concerned, these ticket waters are not stocked as plentifully as those reaches which are kept in private hands and lightly fished; as far, however, as salmon, sea trout, and herling go, every flood brings fresh supplies to distribute themselves over the whole river. On the lower reaches, where the fish are fresher from the sea, they take the fly pretty well, and each season some heavy ones are caught, even up to fifty pounds. On the upper waters above Johnstone Bridge they do not rise so freely, and the worm becomes more killing than the fly.

The Annan is not a very well protected river, for there are only a few regular water-bailiffs, helped by some thirty gamekeepers, who are sworn in as such. If, however, a keeper has been attending his master all day in the field, or if he really properly sees to the many duties of game preserving, he

will have but little spare time for guarding fish. Hence there is a great deal of poaching carried on with impunity both in the river itself and in the tributaries. It is on record that at Milkfoot, in one night's work, seventy-two spawning salmon were taken out with leisters; and tradition has it that the biggest of these was divided, the smallest half weighing thirty-three pounds, while the whole capture was salted, packed into barrels, and buried in a neighbouring moss until they could be removed safely.

Very few fish can enter the river until the nets come off, and the few that did get in owed it chiefly to an agreement that at one time existed between Mr. Mackenzie, of Newbie, and the upper proprietors. By this arrangement, Mr. Mackenzie, who owns the four and a half miles immediately above the mouth, agreed to discontinue netting, provided the owners above did the same, and for several years this worked very well, until the anglers of Annan and the so-called "four towns" declined

to fall in with the scheme, as they hold a charter from King James granting them a right of angling on this water in return for some loyal action.

As to spring angling, it does not exist. The local and other newspapers reporting the capture of clean fish in some numbers in March, April, and May are quite in error. Those who make these reports may credit them, because they know no better, and also they bring angling visitors to the Annan. As a matter of fact, these so-called clean fish are nothing more or less than well-mended kelts, which, although thin and lanky, put on a silvery appearance. Mr. J. Bell Irving, a sharp observer and a keen angler, tells me that in the ten years that he has had Mount Annan he has never seen a spring salmon in the river!

To fish the lower reaches properly, wading trousers are necessary, and an eighteen-foot rod will be wanted. Until the 1st of September minnows, worms, spoons, and other lures may be used, but after that date the fly only is permitted on the



lower waters. Up to about fifteen miles above the mouth, salmon average eighteen pounds, grilse five pounds, and sea trout from one to two pounds. The local flies are peculiar to the district, most of them having wings of brown or grey turkey, with bodies of yellow, orange, red, and black mohair, and longish red or black hackles. The best of the standard flies are Jock Scot and the Black and Silver Doctors. The local sea trout flies have wings of brown and grey turkey, corn-crake, missel thrush, woodcock and partridge, with mohair bodies, much like the local salmon flies. John Jackson, Queensberry Square, Dumfries, ties all these local patterns right well, and at a moderate price. Some of the Annan flies are tied on Kirby bend hooks, and in large waters size 18 may be used, which corresponds with the 6/0 of the Limerick bend, although the ordinary sizes are from an inch and a half iron to one of half that length.

Here are the dressings of the three local

favourites, and those anglers who tie their own flies will see how easily they lend themselves to an infinity of variations :—

## 1.

Tag : Silver twist.

Tail : Topping and Indian crow.

Body : Two turns yellow seal fur, one of red, rest  
                  brightish claret, silver tinsel all the  
                  way up.

Hackle : Dark claret, Indian crow at shoulder.

Wings : Red turkey with white tips, fibres of teal  
                  wing and golden pheasant rump feather,  
                  topping over all.

## 2.

Tag : Silver twist.

Tail : Topping and Indian crow.

Body : Two turns yellow seal, one of scarlet,  
                  remainder amethyst, silver tinsel all the  
                  way up.

Hackle : Grey cock commencing half way up body,  
                  gallina at shoulder.

Wings: Brown and white mottled turkey, a few fibres of teal wing.

3.

Tag and Tail: As above.

Body: Two turns yellow seal, one of red, and rest very dark claret, well picked out, silver tinsel all the way up.

Hackle: Coch-y-bondhu from half way, two turns of blue at shoulder.

Wings: Two strips of red turkey with white tips, and a few fibres of teal wing.

In times of flood the Annan runs remarkably black and large, taking from twelve to twenty-four hours to come into fishing order, when, though it remains black, it is yet clear, and in this state is at its very best for three or four days. The two principal anglings are those of Mount Annan and Hoddon Castle.

The former has been rented for the last eleven years by Mr. J. Bell Irving, who has taken the greatest interest in the river, and spared no efforts

to improve the angling. This stretch commences at the top of Mount Annan Island and extends up to the junction of the Mein on both banks, a distance of about two miles, in which there are just a dozen



THE SALMON POOL.

good pools, two of which—the Back of the Wood and the Salmon Pool—are boated, the others, of which perhaps the best is the Island Stream, being waded with trousers. On this water, Mr. J.

Bell Irving has on several occasions, after the removal of the nets, killed ten fish a day to his



THE ISLAND STREAM

own rod, all with the fly and all fresh run; while Mr. W. O. Bell Irving had fifteen in two consecutive days; and here at any time after the 10th

of September, when the water is right, sport is pretty certain.

The Hoddum Castle water, belonging to Mr. E. Brooks, and in which there are fourteen good casts, commences at the top of Mount Annan and goes up on both banks for two miles, until it joins the Castlemilk property. Here, in 1892, Tom Reid, one of Mr. Brooks's keepers, had a day of five fish, headed by one of forty five and a half pounds, while another Hoddum keeper, Jock Dalzell, in the time of the late Mr. Sharpe, brought off a much more singular event, for one day, when ferreting the banks of a pool, he bagged a rabbit and a spring salmon at one shot, the fish, happening to jump as he pulled trigger on the bunny, and being exactly in the line of fire, both were killed.

As the Annan is the first of the Solway rivers to be dealt with, it will here be as well to allude superficially to the various ways in which the Firth is netted and poached. To enter fully into the subject would require a volume to itself, so only

the most prominent features are indicated, and even that must be done in a somewhat cursory manner.

The chief trouble arises from the fact of the Scotch and English sides having different laws. The coasts of Cumberland and Dumfriesshire are not very far apart, and at low tide the Solway is represented by a shallow, narrow channel, in some places easily fordable, which proximity of the two shores brings into great contrast the differences that exist in the laws governing each of them. In England, the weekly close time is forty-two hours, from Saturday at 6 a.m. to midnight on Sunday; in Scotland it is thirty-six hours, from 6 p.m. on Saturday to 6 a.m. on Monday. Needless almost to point out that this anomaly is taken advantage of, and fishing is carried on in every part of the Solway until 6 p.m. on Saturday, and renewed again at midnight on Sunday; and thus the close time is really reduced to thirty hours.

On the English shore nets are not permitted to have a mesh of less than two inches, or eight inches

round; on the Scotch one the mesh limit is one and three-quarter inches, or seven inches round. Again, in England fixed engines—that is, bag and stake nets—are illegal, and abolished; but in Scotland they exist, and are legal.

In England, water bailiffs have the power to search boats and nets, etc., while in Scotland they cannot do so. A summons issued against a poacher in England is not serviceable in Scotland, and *vice versa*. The yearly close times of the two shores also differ, which is perhaps unavoidable, as the Eden is an early river, while the Esk, Annan and Nith are late ones; and it seems as if the only way of getting over this difficulty would be to mark out by buoys the English and Scotch channels of the Solway, which would permit the water bailiffs to see clearly on which side of it a boat was fishing.

On the English side the Eden District Board issue licences to fish with drift or whammel nets. On the Scotch side no nets of that description are allowed. These boats come from the English shore



with crews of four or five men, though only one or two are required to be at work at once, the extra men being used to keep the net continually going. Although these boats are licensed to fish in the Eden district, most of their netting is done on the Scotch parts of the Solway. Likewise on the English side there are many licensed haaf net fishers, who take possession of the Scotch shores and openly defy Scotch fishermen to turn them away, and as matters once stood there was no remedy for this lawlessness.

The haaf net is something like a large shrimp net, and is chiefly used just where the rivers join the sea. As the salmon commence to enter fresh water with the flow of the tide, the men who use them face it and push their nets against it, and then as the tide turns they face the ebb. It is remarkable that both the Eden and Annan Boards grant licences to fish in this way for a sum of about fifty shillings a season, and to judge from the numbers that used to be employed daily, the

business was a paying one. During the last two or three years this haaf net fishing has been ruined by the whammel, or hang nets; and where there once were on the two shores upwards of a hundred of these fishers, there were in 1892 only fourteen licences granted by the town of Annan.

In addition, both sides of the Solway are infested by sparling fishers; they begin operations in August and fish throughout the winter, with a very small mesh net. There are fully a dozen of these boats, working chiefly at night. It is well known they fish for *salmonidae*, and that the sale of all the sparlings to be got in the district would not pay the wages of the crew of one boat!

The whammel or hang nets were started about forty years back by two men from the English shore. They met with such success that they soon had many followers, and there are now forty boats working with these nets, not perhaps every day, but certainly every time when there is an appearance of a run of fish. These nets are from three hundred

to eight hundred yards long, and at low water they cover the whole of the channel, intercepting almost every fish, and doing great harm to the breeding stock of the Solway rivers. The net is folded in the stern of the boat, then as three-quarter ebb approaches the men row across the channel, paying it out behind them; this done, they let the net float down channel, when all fish striking it run their heads through the mesh and are hanged by the gills. The end of the net farthest from the boat is fastened to a post with a buoy on the top, and so weighted as to float upright, the net having sinkers on the lower side, with cork floats or bladders on the upper one. Thus a long wall of net is floated down the channel, which, as soon as the tide begins to flow, is again floated upwards, till about one-quarter flood.

These whammel nets are the most destructive and wasteful that have ever been invented. They not only kill alike kelts and clean fish, but they are wasteful to a degree, for many fish become disentangled and sink to the bottom of the sea; and

those that are brought into the boat are blown up to an unnatural size by having been hanged for hours and left dead in the water, and are as much unfit for food as any drowned or strangled animal.\*

The last net to be mentioned, though by no means the least destructive, is the paidle net—simply a small stake net, which is worked for catching salmon under pretence of taking flounders. These nets are more in evidence after the lawful ones are removed, and take large quantities of fish out of season.

What, then, with haaf, sparling, whammel, paidle nets and fixed nets, it is wonderful that there are any fish left to stock the Solway rivers; and as a matter of fact they get scarcer every season.

In 1890, Mr. J. Bell Irving, of Mount Annan, who closely studies and takes the greatest interest in the

\* Since this chapter was written the House of Lords have declared the hang nets of the Tay to be illegal. It is greatly to be hoped this decision may apply to all rivers, whether in England or in Scotland.

Annan fisheries, reported to the Fishery Board that only about eighty fish had been caught in the Annan that season, the heaviest of which was forty-seven pounds. He advocates the deferring of the opening of the river until the middle of April, and complains bitterly of the poaching of the whammel nets and the inefficient protection of the river itself, stating that the upper waters are habitually "burned."

In 1891,\* Mr. Irving reports the capture of about six hundred fish to rod and line, almost all taken after the nets came off, the heaviest of which weighed forty-four pounds. In the same year, Mr. A. Johnstone Douglas, the Chairman of the Annan District Board, writes as follows to the Fishery Board:—

"Nothing short of legislation for regulating the whole of the fishings on the English and Scotch shores of the Solway can possibly unravel the tangled skein of laws at present applicable to the Solway Firth. The right of salmon and the public right of

\* The autumn of this year was remarkably wet, and consequently there was extraordinarily good late sport throughout Scotland.

white fishing has for many years been in serious conflict on the Scotch side of the Solway, and the legislature should step in and define the rights of the conflicting interests. The annual weekly close times differ on the English and Scotch shores of the Solway, and they should be made the same."

These are matters which it is to be hoped the present Royal Commission will deal with, and not pass over simply because the "tangled skein" they have to unravel appears extremely bewildering, and has by its very intricacy beaten the efforts of all previous Commissions.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE AYR, IRVINE AND GARNOCK.

THESE three Ayrshire streams are hardly worth mentioning from the angler's point of view, for salmon are, as nearly as possible, extinct in their waters.

The Ayr is the largest river of the county, with a run of about forty miles. Up till 1896 there was no District Board, and for many years prior to the formation of one the Ayr was subjected to every evil to which a salmon river could possibly be exposed. There was no attempt made to observe the close times; smolts and par were caught by myriads, while in the lower reaches, as fish ascended the mill dams, they were gaffed by the mill hands. In the middle reaches they were poisoned by pollutions from chemical works and

cotton mills: while, if a few lucky fish survived all perils, and succeeded in gaining the upper waters, they were certain to be destroyed on the spawning beds by the colliers. In addition, bag and stake nets worked close to the river mouth, so small wonder the salmon were almost wholly killed off. Yet in or about the year 1810 there are records that tell of cartloads of fish being taken from this river by net and coble, while as late as seventy years ago this was one of the rivers where it was the custom of the farm servants on its banks to stipulate they should not be obliged to eat salmon more than three days in the week. At Catrine, sixteen miles from the mouth, there are dams which are impassable: but as the opening up of these would only take fish into a thickly populated mining district, where it would be impossible to protect them, except at a very great expense, it has been proposed to concentrate all efforts for the restoration of the fish on the sixteen miles between Catrine and the sea, which



admits of much easier protection, and holds many fine pools and spawning grounds.

The smaller streams of the Irvine and Garnock fall into the sea ten miles north of Ayr, and as salmon streams they are totally destroyed, though there are no fishing stations in the river, or in the estuary, or on the sea coast, within six miles of the river mouth. Now and again, during a prolonged spate, a few fish are said to enter them, but only to be destroyed by poison as soon as the waters subside, and the fatal pollutions regain their strength.

In 1896 the Ayr County Council began to take steps to banish these deadly pollutions; and in doing this they ought to be successful, for since the Countess of Seafield gained her action, and compelled the distillers of Speyside to discontinue the pollution of the Spey,\* all other actions based on the same grounds must surely have a similar

\* See chapter on "Spey" in Vol. II.

ending, and if the pollutions of these two pretty streams were once done away with, there would be nothing to prevent them from abounding in fish. But it would be wise, before the defilements were abolished, to have it made clear that nets were not to fish in the mouth or on the sea coasts nearer than they have hitherto done.

I may also say that in 1863, when quartered at Ayr one autumn, I fished each of these rivers many times without ever seeing a salmon in them.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE CREE.

DRAINS one hundred and seventy-two square miles, and, rising in Loch Moan, in Kirkcudbrightshire, its upper waters form the march with Ayrshire, while the lower ones define the Wigtownshire boundaries, and after a run of twenty-five miles it falls into the long and wide estuary of Wigtown Bay, five miles below Newton Stewart. It has many tributaries, some of which flow from lochs, while the river itself, five miles above Newton Stewart, flows through Loch Cree, two miles in length by about a quarter broad. A short distance beyond the head of this loch the Minnock, or Minnick, falls in, and becomes the larger and better angling stream, as it receives the waters of Loch Trool, which covers three hundred and

twenty acres. The very deep outlet of this loch is through a narrow gorge of some twenty feet wide, and here sluices have been placed by Lord Galloway so as to heighten the surface of the loch, and thus an artificial spate can be created



LOCH TROOL.

when desirable. This has answered well, and has been the means of stocking the river and providing sport in times of drought.

About three miles above the junction the Minnick is obstructed by the Lynn of Glencaird;

but as in the three miles below it there are nice spawning grounds, and no less than twenty-seven good pools, the opening up of this Lynn is not a matter of very great importance. On the Cree proper there is also the Lynn of Bargrennan, which to a great extent bars fish from the ten miles of water above it, and also from Loch Moan. A certain number of fish get past, but not a great many; while as the Lynn Pool, where fish congregate in numbers, offers every facility to the stroke hauler, it is to be regretted that they are not helped up this obstacle by a ladder, if only to take them out of harm's way.

The Earl of Galloway owns all the Cree fishing from the mouth up to its junction with the Minnick, and also all that stream as far as the Glencaird Lynn. He also owns the left bank of the Cree from the junction up to Loch Moan, while on the right bank there are several proprietors. From the 11th of February in this year of 1900 the river will get such a chance as it never had before.

for, together with the Minnick, it has been taken on a twenty-one years' lease by an association of six gentlemen, viz., the Duke of Bedford, Mr. John Cobbold, Mr. Alfred Gilbey, Mr. Alfred Harnsworth, Sir Herbert Maxwell and Sir Greville



THE CREEP AT MINNICK.

Smyth. Each season this Syndicate holds the fishings up till the 31st of July, after which they revert to Lord Galloway and the other proprietors until the end of the angling season. All the net and coble fishings have been taken off at

a considerable outlay, in the hope of making a first-class fishery of these streams. It is to be regretted that more of these Associations are not formed; and as a guide to those wishing to enter on such an experiment, annexed are the rules of the Cree Club:—

RULES OF THE CREE SALMON ANGLING ASSOCIATION.

I.—The river shall be divided into the following beats (subject to ultimate adjustment):—

No. 1. From the sea up to the Brewery Pool, inclusive.

No. 2. From the Kirk Pool up to Linloskin, inclusive.

No. 3. From the boat above Linloskin to Penninghame Boat-house.

(It is agreed that during his residence at Penninghame Sir Greville Smyth shall be at liberty to fish the two pools opposite Penninghame House when he pleases, resigning the two lower pools in his beat for the day, unless it happens to be No. 3, to the rod fishing next below such beat, except that in beat No. 4 so much of the single Cree as is contained therein shall be so resigned. But any friend or sub-lessee of Sir Greville fishing during his absence shall take his regular turn with the other rods.)

No. 4. From Cordoran Burn-foot to Clachanassy Bridge on single Cree.

No. 5. Single water of Cree from Clachaneasy Bridge to the marsh of Ayrshire. (It may be found desirable to divide this very long beat into two after 15th May.)

No. 6. River Minnick up to the Roman Bridge.

No. 7. River Minnick from Roman Bridge upwards. (This beat did not come into possession of the Association till 16th May, 1900.)

II.—The above beats shall be balloted for before March 1st in every season, and the six members of the Association shall adhere to the order thus fixed throughout the season, subject to mutual private arrangement. The beats shall be fished in succession from No. 7 downwards. Nos. 2 and 7 shall count as if drawn together, the member drawing either of these numbers having the choice of these two beats throughout the season on each day when they fall to his turn. The beat which he does not occupy may be balloted for among the members present.

III.—Every member shall be at liberty to sub-let his angling rights for the whole or any part of a season, also to take a friend to angle on his beat for the day, or to lend a friend his beat; but if two rods fish the same beat, one of these must be a member of the Association, or one to whom a member has sub-let his rod for a period of not less than one month.

No member shall be at liberty to send two friends to angle on the same beat.

IV.—No keeper or ghillie shall be allowed to angle except in presence of a member; but a member or his friend may allow his ghillie to angle while he is resting.

V.—No bait shall be used except the artificial fly, neither shall angling be practised from a boat, except on the Kirk Pool, the Grey



Stane, and the Boat Pool above Linloskin on No. 2, and West Mains Pool on No. 3.

VI.—After 15th March in each year no member, sub-lessee or member's friend shall exceed the limits of his beat for the day, unless by express invitation of members in possession of other beats. But if a member is known to be absent, or has intimated his absence, and has not given or sub-let his beat for the day, it may be balloted for among the other members, sub-lessees and friends present.

VII.—A member infringing any of the above rules shall forfeit, *ipso facto*, five pounds to the funds of the Association on each occasion, and members will be considered responsible for any infringement of the rules by their sub-lessees or friends. No member shall be at liberty to sub-let his rod to any one who declines to be bound by the rules of the Association.

N.B.—It is earnestly requested that every member, sub-lessee, or friend will forward particulars of the sport obtained to the Superintendent of the Fishery,

JAMES M'HAFFIE, Esq.,

Ellangowan,

Newton Stewart,

in order that it may be recorded in *The Chronicle of the Cree Crew*, which it is desired to make as full and regular as possible. Cards for this purpose will be supplied at the beginning of each season.

The Cree opens on the 11th of February, closes for nets on the 26th of August, and for the rod on the 31st of October. It is an early river, containing clean fish in February,

although April is the best month for salmon, and June and July for grilse, the former averaging about twelve pounds and the latter five pounds; they rise well all the spring and summer, but badly in the autumn, except



URR CRIEF AT NEWTON STEWART.

in the upper waters. A rod of sixteen to eighteen feet will be required, and the standard patterns kill—Black Doctor, Durham Ranger, Jock Scot and Poynder for choice. Trousers are necessary in the main stream, but no waders are

wanted above the junction of the Cree and the Minnick.

The lower part of the Cree and Loch Cree are infested by pike, their chief stronghold being a long stretch of dead water in the neighbourhood of Penninghame House, at present rented by Sir Greville Smyth, and as he is also a member of "the Cree Crew," the pike are likely to have a bad time under this new arrangement.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE DEE OF KIRKCUDBRIGHTSHIRE

DRAINS three hundred and sixty square miles, and is one of the most productive netting rivers of the Solway Firth. It flows from Loch Dee, a somewhat out-of-the-way loch in the west of the county, famed for its trout, but into which salmon cannot pass. After a run of twenty miles or so it joins a larger stream, the Ken, just opposite Parton Station, and the two shortly expand into another Loch Dee, from whence the Dee flows for twelve miles, a big river until, shortly before reaching the royal burgh of Kirkcudbright, it forms an estuary and joins the Solway Firth six miles lower down. The Ken rises to the east of the high hill of Cairnsmuir, and has a run, during which it receives the waters of the Deugh, of twenty-eight miles

before it unites with the Dee, and at the late end of the season a few fish ascend both these streams. Below New Galloway the Ken expands into Loch Ken, five miles long and abounding in pike. From this loch about a hundred years ago came the largest of these fresh water sharks ever got in Scotland; it weighed seventy-two pounds and was killed by rod and fly by George Murray, a game-keeper in the employ of the Earl of Stair, and the head is still to be seen in Kenmure Castle.

Below Loch Dee the river is fished in two ways peculiar to itself: first, by "yairs," some of which are owned by Captain Hope, R.N., of St. Mary's Isle, and others by the town of Kirkcudbright. These yairs are V-shaped wicker-work erections; a man sits at the point of the V with a net of peculiar shape and construction, and as soon as he feels a fish strike, it is hauled up; the opening at the point of the V is about six yards in width. One set of yairs is used to fish with the flood tide and another with the ebb. Of course,

these instruments are quite contrary to the general rule prevailing all over Scotland, except on the Solway, viz., that fixed engines for the capture of salmon within a river or estuary are illegal.



A WEIR AT WORK.

The second unusual method is the capture of fish by what is called the shoulder net. It is used in the numerous holes or pots in the rocky bed of the river lying between Tonguehead and the

tide, and is nothing more than a gigantic landing net, with a pole of twenty-four feet long, a net six feet deep, and a ring of five feet across from the pole, and about seven feet in breadth; it is used chiefly at night for searching all these pots, and after exploring one, it is raised by placing the pole in a wooden shoe fastened to the shoulder of the fisherman. It wants strength, skill, and practice to use it well, but in expert hands it is deadly. The most favourable time is when there is a run of grilse with a moderately small water; but the large hauls only last a few nights, as if the water falls the run of fish ceases, while if it increases and becomes really big the shoulder net cannot be used. Although, perhaps, this method of fishing does not do quite so much harm as is supposed, it is nevertheless a villainous poaching method of fishing which should not be permitted in any river.

Up till about 1870 there was a famous shoulder net fisherman, one Richardson, who kept a book

in which he entered all the fish he caught. Besides his regular wages, he got a penny extra for every salmon and a halfpenny for every grilse, and in four of his best years his book shows he took in—

			Salmon.		Grilse.
1838	.	.	546	...	7074
1840	.	.	1007	...	5415
1842	.	.	705	...	6482
1843	.	.	1042	...	4398
			<hr/>		<hr/>
			3300		23,369

With reference to these figures, the owner of the Doachs, or cruives at Tongueland, three miles above Kirkcudbright, denies their accuracy, and maintains that these fish were not taken by Richardson alone, but in conjunction with others, sharing the captures and using other kinds of nets than the shoulder net. This is probably the correct solution of these scores, which, even then, are astonishingly large; but it must not be overlooked that sixty years ago the tendency was to brag of



big hauls and exaggerate them, while now every thing is done to conceal such events.

The lower parts of the Dee are fished hard by net and coble, but not by so many nets as formerly.



THE SHOOTER NET

because one tacksman now has the whole fishing, and the fish can consequently be taken with fewer nets than when several parties worked it, which gave rise to great competition. About the same

number of fish are got, but the river is not worried so much.

The fish that enter the Dee having thus escaped the nets and cobbles, the yairs and the shoulder nets, have yet a fourth peril to pass ere there remains no other danger to face than the chance of being taken by the rod or sneaked by a poacher. I allude to the Doachs at Tongueland, loudly complained of by the upper proprietors as capturing the majority of the fish that have escaped the other devices and are making their way to the upper waters. These Doachs are the property of Mr. Murray Stewart, who claims to hold them by ancient and special rights, exempting him from the operation of the by-laws regulating the construction and use of cruives and mill dams: and, as will be seen from the illustration, they are partly natural and partly artificial, practically forming a cruive dyke, which gives the owner the power of capturing the majority of running fish. They have been the subject of much litigation, and if the money spent









in law had been applied to purchasing these obstructions with a view to blowing them up, they might probably have been removed long ago.

March and April are the best salmon months, May and June being practically blank. Then in July the grilse begin to run, and fish continue to enter the river till the middle of November. Salmon run up to thirty pounds, but average thirteen pounds; the grilse are remarkable for their size, many of them weighing ten pounds, while the average weight is eight and a quarter.

Well! what with sweep nets, yairs, shoulder nets, and Doachs, small wonder that there are few fish left for the angler until these devices are forced by the law to cease working. One gentleman writes me: "The rod fishing on my property is practically useless until the nets, etc., come off." Another says: "It is only in the autumn that there are any quantity of fish in the Dee, but then they are so 'dour' and

hard to rise, that it is only occasionally one comes to the fly." A third correspondent says: "The fishing in the Dee is very poor. Over-netting has been the great cause of the falling off, and the running fish that escape them are mostly caught at Tongueland Bridge in the pass."

The river opens on the 11th of February, closes for nets 26th of August, and for rods 31st of October. A sixteen to eighteen foot rod will be wanted on the lower reaches, the Annan flies will kill, and waders are necessary.

It is to be hoped that if the Cree Club turns out a success, a Dee Club may shortly be started in friendly rivalry; as matters are at present, it is not worth while going twenty miles out of one's way to fish this badly treated river.

In 1897 the clerk to the Dee District Board states the take of fish to all the kinds of Dee nets was 876 salmon and 1900 grilse, so that there



is no doubt a Kirkcudbrightshire Dee Angling Association would have material to work on if they could take some of the capturing devices into their own hands.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE DOON, GIRVAN AND STINCHAR.

THE Doon drains one hundred and twenty-six square miles, and rises in those high hills on the borders of Kirkcudbrightshire whose southern slopes send out the Dee and the Cree to the Solway. Its head waters spring from Loch Enoch, a desolate, rock-bound loch about 1700 feet above sea level, which sends a considerable stream into the head of Loch Doon, a fine sheet of water six miles in length, and covering 1240 acres. From the foot of this loch the river rushes through a very narrow, rocky outlet into Ness Glen, on which of late years a good ladder has been placed, which fish ascend pretty freely, passing through the loch into the Enoch tributary. They are seldom caught in the loch, and perhaps a dozen each year would fully represent the total take

to the road. Below Ness Glen the Doon runs for about a mile through meadow land, and passing



THE AULD BRIG O' DOON

Dalmellington, it expands into Loch Bogton, a mile long and full of pike; from thence it has a run of sixteen miles until it falls into the sea, two miles to

the south of the mouth of the Ayr. Between the embouchures of these two streams there are some fifteen or twenty bag and stake nets working, much to the detriment of both rivers, and in addition to this the Doon mouth is hard fished by net and coble.

The river is certainly capable of very great improvement, but as matters are at present it is hardly worth calling a salmon river. The waters of the loch could easily be stored up at a small cost, and an artificial spate provided whenever necessary. If this were done, if the nets were removed from between the mouths of the Doon and the Ayr, and if the pollutions from collieries, iron-works and factories were suppressed, then there would be nothing to prevent this river from becoming one of the best, if not actually the very best, in the south-west of Scotland. In 1893, five hundred dead or dying fish were removed from the river, poisoned by one discharge of refuse from a pit of an iron company!

The chief proprietors are the Marquis of Ailsa, the Duke of Portland and Mr. A. F. McAdam.

The river is quite an early one, and holds clean fish on the opening day, the 11th of February, though the main run of salmon is in August, with grilse and sea trout in July. There is an early spring run, and then in May, June and July very few fish appear. The spring fish rise well to the fly, the only lure allowed on the Ailsa fishings, while the autumn ones are very dour and hard to tempt.

The Fishery Board Report of 1887 values the angling of the whole river at £300, and puts the rental of the nets at £150; but the Report does not state how these values were arrived at. The nets come off on the 26th of August, the rod ceasing on the 31st of October. It has been often suggested that the river might with advantage be opened to the rod only on the 1st of February, instead of the 11th, and closed for angling on the 15th of October instead of the 31st.

Wading stockings are wanted in some of the pools, a sixteen-foot rod will cover the water, and the ordinary salmon flies will kill, though some of the keepers and natives use the following local patterns, and declare they will beat all others :—

NO. 1.—LORD WILLIAM.

Tag: Silver tinsel.

Tail: Sprig of golden pheasant rump feather.

Body: One turn scarlet pig's wool and rest orange,  
well picked out; silver tinsel all the  
way up.

Hackle: Coch-y-bondhu; teal at shoulder.

Wings: Two strips red turkey; 'whiteish tips.

NO. 2.—THE WILD GOOSE.

Tag and tail as No. 1.

Body: A turn of scarlet, of pale yellow, medium blue,  
and black pig's wool, well picked out;  
silver tinsel all the way up.

Hackle: Thick black one.

Wings: Two strips from the grey feather of the  
wild goose wing.

## No. 3.—THE YELLOW GOOSE.

Is dressed precisely as No. 2, except that the wing  
is two strips from the yellowish feather  
from the wild goose.

These patterns were given me by William Marr, Mr. Thorneycroft's keeper on the Patna water, and he swears by them and uses no others. They are tied on Kendal bends, No. 11 size, equal to No. 3 in Limericks.

The Girvan drains ninety-six square miles of country, and rises on Lord Ailsa's property in the small loch of Girvan's Eye, in the parish of Straiton, some eight miles above the village of that name, and after a course of thirty miles falls into the sea opposite to the well-known Ailsa Craig. The name is said to be derived from a Gaelic word signifying "rough" a term which is certainly descriptive of the river. A few miles below Straiton village the Girvan falls over the Linn of Blairquhan, which fish cannot pass except when the water is big, and even then not in any numbers. The sea coasts at the mouth of the river

—especially the four miles to the north of it—are netted with extreme severity, there being some fifty bag nets in that distance, commencing at only three hundred yards from the mouth, while nets and cobles are used in the river itself; so small wonder that the Girvan is hardly worthy of mention as a salmon angling stream.

Some years ago the lessee of the nets agreed with the upper proprietors to set them back to six hundred yards on either side of the mouth, and to discontinue the netting in the river; this resulted in many more fish being netted on the coasts and caught by the rods in the pools. Unfortunately this agreement came to an end, but it unmistakably showed what was wanted for the good of all concerned; and with this and numerous other similar experiences to guide them, it is quite extraordinary that the Government do not make laws for the better control of these greedy coast nets. Since the termination of this arrangement, the nets have again been placed only three hundred yards from the Girvan mouth, while the cobles have



resumed work in the river. There are also numerous mill dams, which by degrees are being provided with good fish passes, while the mill wheels and lades are also receiving protection.

The watching of the Girvan is but moderate, for it is left to the keepers of the estates on the banks, and as in the autumn they are busiest with their shooting duties, just when there are most fish to protect, the work cannot be well done, and consequently poaching is common, and many are the stories told by the natives about such forays.

The chief proprietors are the Marquis of Ailsa, Captain Hunter Blair, R.N., Sir James Fergusson, of Kilkerran, Sir Reginald Cathcart, of Killochan Castle, Mr. John Shaw Kennedy, Mr. Hugh Wallace, of Cloncaird Castle, and Mr. J. C. Kennedy.

The Killochan water is, perhaps, as good as any on the river, and typical of the other reaches. It extends on both banks for three miles, part of it being let to a club of anglers at Girvan, who permit the use of all lures. On this water there

are nine pretty casts, which, sad to say, hold very few fish. When they are caught, salmon average ten pounds, sea trout two pounds, and whiting three-quarters of a pound.

The Fishery Board Report of 1896 says that "In the Girvan district but little interest seems to be taken in the salmon fishings. A Board has been formed, but it holds no meetings, employs no staff, and raises no funds. The fishings in this district merit more attention than they are at present receiving."

The angling is practically confined to the last six weeks of the season, the upper parts of the river being best for salmon and grilse and the lower ones for sea trout. One gentleman who knows the river well writes me: "The Girvan can scarcely be classed as a salmon river worth mentioning. It rises and falls very quickly, and the rod fishing is of little use till after the nets are taken off on the 10th of September; then the leaves very soon begin to fall, and are most troublesome." Another says: "I get

a deal of amusement out of the Girvan, but very few fish; and if it finds a place at all in your book, it should come among the rivers 'capable of improvement'."

The river opens on the 25th of February, closes for nets on the 10th of September, and for rods on the 31st of October.

Wading stockings are necessary on some of the pools, and a rod of fourteen to sixteen feet will cover the water. Flies, the same as the Doon.

The Stinchar, the most southern and perhaps the prettiest of the Ayrshire streams, drains one hundred and thirty-three square miles of the lands lying between the watershed of the Girvan and the marches of the shires of Wigtown and Kirkcudbright. Rising in some of the upland moors of Barr parish, after a run of thirty miles it falls into the sea at Ballantrae, close to Bargany Castle, the residence of Major the Hon. North de Coigny Dalrymple Hamilton, who employs a watcher to look after his fishings and to see that the weekly close times are

observed. There are no pollutions to speak of, and but very few mill dams, and those that exist do not seriously hinder the passage of fish, and altogether the Stinchar is an ideal small salmon river, with plenty of pools and streams and good spawning ground.

Sad to relate, bag nets are permitted within three hundred and fifty yards of the mouth, and the sweep net is freely used in the river; thus the severe and systematic netting of so small a stream prevents anything like a fair proportion of fish reaching the upper waters until after the nets come off on the 10th of September, for before that the coast nets get the bulk of the fish, and the nets in the river then capture most of those that have escaped the nets in the sea. The residents on the banks complain loudly that this incessant use of the sweep nets has nearly annihilated the sea trout.

For the last eight miles of its course the bed of the Stinchar, composed as it is of gravel, is liable to much shifting in times of floods, the mouth especially

being subject to great alterations, and then, when a drought comes, what water there is trickles away through beach and gravel, and the entrance is entirely closed until a fresh spate cuts another outlet—an evil which could be remedied by a small expenditure.

Although this river opens on the 25th of February, it is a very late one, the first clean fish seldom appearing till the end of May or beginning of June, while the best and heaviest fish do not run till autumn, when they are said to be in good condition: but if that is really the case, they must differ from those of all the other rivers in Scotland, for I have never met with a September fish that could for one moment compare with a March or April one. However, the river is netted up to the 10th of September, and the rods continue to be plied to the 15th of November.

For its size, this river yields larger fish than any other in Scotland. In 1882, the man at the nets had a cock fish of forty-four pounds and a hen of forty-two pounds; and Mr. Inglis, a brother of the

factor at Bargany, had a day of three fish weighing thirty-three pounds, thirty pounds and twenty-eight pounds.

The sea coast nets are Crown property, and it is remarkable, considering the ownership, that such severe netting should be permitted. The bag nets extend from Brennane Head on the north to Carsewell Point on the south, a distance of sixteen miles, in which there are about sixty of them. In 1887, they were rented by a Mr. Johnston, of Kirkcolm, who complained to the Fishery Board of damage done by trawlers; as it could not be settled whether the Crown was bound to protect its lessee, or whether the lessee was to protect himself, Mr. Johnston suggested as a sort of set-off that he was to have his netting season prolonged for a fortnight, and be exempted during the whole season from observing the weekly close time! Needless to say, both propositions were curtly refused.

The Fishery Board Reports of 1897 state that the nets took 298 salmon (one of sixty-two pounds),

210 grilse and 114 sea trout, while the rods in the same year had a total of 41 salmon and grilse.

The other proprietors of the river are Mr. W. McConnel, of Knockdolian, Captain Hugh Hamilton, of Pinmore and Daljarrock, and Captain Hughes Onslow, of Alton Albany.

This last-mentioned stretch consists of about a mile and a half between Barr and Auchensoul. Here the Stinchar is very rapid, and owing to the too good draining of the sheep hills, in times of rain it rises and falls so fast that it is seldom in fishing order for more than a few hours at a time. On this section sea trout run fairly large, averaging three pounds; but about a score of them, with three or four salmon, is the usual season's take, which is only a small thing to what it ought to be if the nets were set back from the river mouth.

The flies already mentioned will kill, a sixteen-foot rod is ample, and wading stockings necessary.

From the foregoing it will be seen that river netting, pollutions, obstructions and poaching are rife in these six Ayrshire streams; that the seventy miles of coasts into which they fall are netted with great severity, there being fully a hundred bag nets in the distance, some of which are working at from three hundred to four hundred yards of the mouths of these rivers. It is quite clear a change for the better is badly wanted; and I venture to think if the six streams were formed into one District, with the Marquis of Ailsa as President of the Board, that much might then be done for them. At present, the one hundred and fifty miles of good angling water that they possess between them does not realise £5 a mile!



## CHAPTER VII.

## THE EARN

DRAINS three hundred and seventy-six square miles, and, issuing from the loch of the same name at St. Fillans, it flows with a winding course for upwards of fifty miles through a richly agricultural and picturesque country, with many fine estates on its banks, until it falls into the Firth of Tay, a short distance above Newburgh.

Some authorities describe this river as a tributary of the Tay, but as the Earn falls into the estuary or Firth of Tay, where it has a width of two miles of brackish tidal water, I think it can hardly be regarded as an affluent of the river Tay in the same way as is the Tummel; and moreover it has not the same close times as the Tay; but however this may be, the river certainly merits a chapter to

itself, for in point of size it is a considerably larger river than the Helmsdale, Beauly, Brora, or Thurso. The loch from which it flows is seven miles in length by a little more than one in breadth, and of great depth. Salmon can enter freely, but they are not often seen there, while the capture of one by the rod is quite a rare event—two somewhat remarkable matters, seeing what vast numbers of fish ascend the river in wet seasons.

The upper reaches run rather more swiftly than the lower ones, but throughout its whole course, when it is in angling ply, there is sufficient current to make pleasant casting, while ensuring to any hooked fish an increased power of offering a stiff down-stream fight. So, without being a very rapid or roaring torrent, the Earn is yet far removed from the sluggishness of the middle waters of the Forth.

From the loch to Crieff Bridge is thirteen miles. From thence to Bridge of Earn is a further twenty-

five miles, with another eight to the junction with the Tay Firth. The Earn opens on the 11th of February for rods and nets, the latter coming off on the 26th of August, while the former fish till the 31st of October. The streams of Ruchill, Lednock, Turret, Machany, Ruthven, and May are the chief tributaries. There are no pollutions, though there are several obstructions in the shape of cruive dykes and mill dams, all of which in times of flood are easily passable, although in periods of drought they are just the reverse. The first of these above the mouth is the Dupplin cruive dyke, which is about two hundred yards long, stretching across the river from bank to bank. The cruive is placed between two small islands, and has but one box, through which the current rushes with such force that fish cannot face it during the weekly close time. Thus, as soon as the nets come off, they gather together below the dyke waiting for a flood. When that does come, the weir offers no hindrance whatever.

I remember reaching Aberdalgie, to fish the Dupplin Reserved Water, on the 11th of October,



THE DUPPLIN CRIVELL.

1891, only to find the Earn in a flood, which lasted for six days, and during the whole of that time fish ran up Dupplin weir incessantly. I spent most

of these days at this weir, and no hour passed but what fifty or sixty attempts could be counted, one-third of which were successful. Morning and afternoon did this go on, and the keeper told me it was continued each night; and never before or since have I seen fish run so continuously for so long a period.

Above Dupplin and six miles below Crieff there is a nearly similar dyke at Strathallan, also fishing a single box cruive. Still further up there is the Dornoch Dam, in which Lord Willoughby used to have a cruive, but which he has ceased to work, at the same time placing a fish pass on the dyke. All cruives confer, more or less, a monopoly, and more or less injure the fishings of the proprietors above them, but the cruive rights are held by such special and ancient titles, which have so often been sanctioned and recognised by the law, that they cannot be done away with without making compensation to their owners. Given the right of cruive fishing, then no one can interfere with it

as long as it is carried on in conformity with the provisions of the bye-law.

However, it is neither the Dupplin nor the Strathallan cruives that prevent the Earn from yielding spring fish to the rod. The nets plying from the Bridge of Earn to the mouth are the culprits. Above this bridge there is no serious netting, though at times a haul of the net is made below Dupplin Weir, where as many as fifty fish have been taken out at one shot, but the nets here are not worked daily. There must be something to render the netting of the last eight miles of the Earn peculiarly deadly and easy, for there are sure to be spring floods, which in other rivers seriously interfere with, even if they do not wholly stop, netting operations. While as at such times it has been clearly shown that Dupplin Weir ceases to be any hindrance, the dearth of fish above it can only be caused by the severity of the netting below.

Sir Patrick Keith Murray, who owns the Ochertyre angling, writes me: "There is no record of any clean fish in the spring or summer; there is only sport after the nets are off and a heavy



STROMAN BRIDGE

flood has occurred." The tenant of the Gask water also writes: "No spring fish has been caught for the last ten years."

The following table will show how the various anglings of the Earn are divided:—

LEFT BANK.	
RIGHT OR SOUTH BANK.	LEFT OR NORTH BANK.
Earl of Ancaster, proprietor.	St. Fillan.
	Dunira (Sir Sydney Dundas, Bart., proprietor), 3 miles.
Aberuchill (Mr. G. L. Dewhurst, proprietor).	Let to Dowager Countess Cairns.
Comrie	Lawers (Colonel Williamson, proprietor).
Earl of Ancaster.	Bridge.
Strowan (Mr. Graham Stirling, proprietor), 2½ miles.	Ochertyre (Sir Patrick Keith Murray, Bart., proprietor), 1 mile.
Let to Mr. Alex. White-law.	Ferntower (Lord Abercromby).
Crief	Bridge.
Drummond Castle (Earl of Ancaster), 3 to 4 miles.	Broich (Mrs. MacLaurin Monteath, proprietress), 200 yards.
	Dalroch, ½ mile.
Colquhoun (J. Stewart Robertson, of Edradynate, proprietor).	Earl of Ancaster, proprietor of angling; let to Captain Home-Drummond Moray, of Abercromby. 2 miles.
Strathallan (Viscount Strathallan, proprietor), 2 miles.	Innerpefferay, 300 yards.
Let to Mr. Graeme A. Whitelaw, M.P.	Strathallan.
Trinity Gask (Sir Robert Moncrieffe, Bart.), 3 to 4 miles.	Auchterarder (Mr. Reid).
Bridge of	Glenegles (Lord Camperdown, proprietor).
Gask (Mr. T. L. Kingston Oliphant). Let to Mr. Ernest Moon.	Dalroch.
	Dunscrub (Lord Rollo and Dunning, proprietor).



Porter		Bridge.
Upper Dupplin (Earl of Kin- noul), 1 mile. Let with Dupplin Cottage.	↓	Invermay (Mr. John Fraser).
		Upper Dupplin.
Dupplin Craive		and Dyke
Dupplin Reserved Water, 1½ miles. Let with Aberdalgie to Mr. A. Wynne Corrie.		Dupplin Loch.
		Dupplin Reserved Water.
Dupplin Lower Water, 1½ miles. Let three days a week to Mr. J. Lathuan, and the other three with Munday House.		Dupplin Lower Water.
Caledonian		Railway Bridge.
Freeland, 1 mile.		Freeland (Mr. C. L. Wood), 1½ miles.
Moncrieffe, 1 mile.		Dunbarney (Miss Craigie), ½ mile.
Bridge		of Earn.
Kinnoulth (Mr. J. A. Weir), ½ mile.	↓	Kilgraston (Mr. S. P. Grant), ½ mile.
		Moncrieffe, ½ mile.
		Kilgraston, ½ mile.
		Earl of Wemyss, 2 miles.
		Carey, ½ mile.
		Mrs. Elizabeth Somerville.
Earl of Wemyss, remainder.		Earl of Wemyss, ½ mile.
	↓	Cordon, 2 miles.
		Mr. D. McKinlay.
Moath		of Earn

RIVER EARN.

A few notes on some of the best known of these anglings will serve as a guide to the whole. Firstly, though, it must be clearly set forth that, as matters are now managed, salmon fishing on the Earn is to be had solely in September and October, while it is only in about every other season that fish arrive in the upper reaches before angling closes. Therefore, it is of no use for any one to make up his mind that he will fish the Earn in any given season, for if it is a dry one not a fish will he get. It takes two or even three good spates after the nets are off to bring the fish up to Crieff, and even then, unless the weather keeps moist, the river runs down very quickly. I have often thought the Earn might be "Grimersta-ed" by storing up the waters of the loch so as to be able to create a spate at any time. If a dam were made at the exit of the river from the loch, I do not think the proprietors below could object, although those above it might perhaps do so in the event of

any portions of their lands becoming flooded by the heightening of the loch waters.

The Drummond Castle water -in a wet season a most excellent reach for sport -begins a little below Crieff Bridge at the Black Hole, and goes down on the south bank for about four miles, in which distance are the Basket Maker, the Clods, the Corner, the Wire Fence, the Temple, Lower Findal, Bridge Stream, Dornoch Dam, and the Boat Hole, some being cast from the bank, while others require wading trousers.

From Dornoch Dam, Mr. G. M. Kelson on one occasion took eleven fish with a small variegated Sun fly of his own composing. This is a pool of about two hundred yards of deep, slow-running water. It was a cloudless day, and after making each cast Mr. Kelson let the fly go wherever the current took it. On the following day, with a breeze and a cloudy sky, he captured other five fish on a two-inch Silver Doctor. The largest fish he

ever got on this water was forty-five and a half pounds.

It is now so difficult for tourist anglers to obtain a fair chance of sport that they are much indebted to Lord Ancaster for the privilege of fishing such fine water by the payment of a moderate charge made by the day, week, or month, particulars of which can be had from the proprietor of the Drummond Arms Hotel, at Crieff. A ticket for September costs £3, one for October £7.

The Ochertyre water commences at Turret Junction and goes down for a mile. No waders are wanted. Fly is the only lure allowed. The take varies from nothing at all in a dry season to thirty or thirty-five fish in a wet one, averaging twelve pounds, but getting black in the last fortnight of the season.

The Strathallan water commences at Millearn Dyke and goes down for two miles on both banks, exclusive of about three hundred yards belonging to Innerpeffray on the north side.

With the exception of two pools which are boated, the rest are easily fished by wading trousers.

The water is divided by the Machany Burn into upper and lower beats. On the former there are only two casts, and the latter is much the best section, on which the first pool is called "The Gurl," fished from the bank on the north side and waded from the south; then comes Houston's stream, upwards of three hundred yards long, but which has not given up many fish for the last three seasons; next there follow in rapid succession the Bend, the Pot (small but very good), the Back of the Island and Murray's Hole, below which Trinity Gask begins. The Bend and Murray's Hole are decidedly the pick of the Struthallan water. This part of the river is somewhat disappointing, for the fish are dour in these reaches, the last three seasons having yielded but sixteen, sixteen, and forty salmon and grilse.

As regards the size of fly best suited for this part opinions differ. The natives use large ones, but Mr. Whitelaw, who has had this water for the last three years, tells me he has been more successful with small ones, and probably here as elsewhere the locals don't know everything; at any



MURRAY'S HOLE.

rate, Mr. Whitelaw last season had a day of five fish to his small flies, while a local angler with his large ones was blank.

The Trinity Gask water consists of from three to four miles on the south bank, placed between Struthallan and Gask, having on the opposite banks

the anglings of Strathallan, Auchterarder, and Lord Camperdown's property. There are nine good pools, some of which are cast from the bank, while others require wading trousers. The best catches are the Grindles, Bank Neuk, C. Pool, and Boat Pool. The whole of it is very pretty water. In 1878, some friends and myself had this fishing in connection with the Carim shootings at Blackford. It was a dry season, and I only fished one day, after an early September flood, when I got two fish of thirty-three and thirty-one pounds, and lost another heavy fellow. Then came more dry weather; and when the rain at last returned I was unable to be there. However, the rent in those days was not a serious matter; moreover, it was divided amongst four, and thus I was very well pleased with my only day on Trinity Gask.

The Gask water lies on the north side of the river, between Trinity Gask and Upper Dupplin, while on the south side opposite to it is the

Duncrub property. Gask is about two miles in length, with Duncrub going down half a mile below it to the Dunning Burn, both reaches having been rented, with Gask House, by Mr. Ernest Moon for the past ten years. At about the middle of the water the two banks are connected by the pretty old Bridge of Dalreoch, on the road to Gask House, an interesting place full of relics of Prince Charlie, and where Lady Nairn lived when she wrote "The Land o' the Leal" and other well-known Scotch songs, including the "Auld Hoose," which was then the house of Gask, but now only represented by a wall.

During these ten seasons no spring fish has ever been got on these anglings. Wading trousers are necessary for some of the pools, of which there are seven, and with the river once in good order they remain so for about a week. The best of them are Hilton Haugh, a difficult one to fish nicely owing to its eddies; the Dam-breast, the pick of them, has more current than the other









DALEFORD TANN



THE STILTS BOAT



pools, and always holds fish, which are usually heavy ones—a thirty-two-pounder being the last representative of the "sockdollagers."

The Bridge Pool at Dalreoch is also a sure hold, and is best cast by wading from the Duncrub side; this is followed by the Red Brae, also waded, and the Chapel Bank, at the tail of which the Gask water ends and that of Upper Dupplin begins. On the south side Duncrub goes down to the Dunning Burn, the best cast on it and also on Upper Dupplin, the fish lying on both sides of the stream.

A good many ladies have met with considerable success casting from the banks of this reach, one fair angler taking no less than five in a day, while Miss Oliphant, a daughter of the late Colonel Oliphant, of Gask, was well known all along Strathearn for her skill with the rod. During the last ten years the best day on this water was in October, 1891, when three rods had just a dozen fish, the heaviest twenty-four pounds, but in that

exceptional year four or five a day were quite common.

Here are the Gask and Duncrub captures to one rod only for the last ten years :

1890	..	..	8 fish, weighing	68 lbs.
1891	..	..	39 ..	503 ..
1892	..	..	18 ..	200 ..
1893	..	..	No water.	
1894	..	..	..	
1895	..	..	20 fish, weighing	231 lbs.
1896	..	..	14 ..	181 ..
1897	..	..	6 ..	62 ..
1898	..	..	6 ..	64 ..

There are a certain number of sea trout coming up in September, for which the best flies are the Green and Teal and a yellow-bodied one with March Brown wings and gold tinsel.

The Upper Dupplin water is about a mile of both banks, and is let with Dupplin Cottage. There are six good pools on it, of which the Dunning Burn and the May Pool are the best,

and from this catch twelve fish in a day have been got. The take for the season averages from twenty to thirty-five fish, usually of heavy weights.

We now come to a stretch of water that is certainly one of the best, if not the very best autumn fishing in Scotland, viz., the far-famed Dupplin Reserved Water, which commences at the Cruive Dyke and goes down for about one and a quarter miles on both banks, in which distance there are just a dozen fine casts. Immediately below the weir comes Back o' Dyke, followed in rapid succession by Dick's, Lord Dupplin's, Stank, Jetties, Minister's, Lord Kinnoull's, Wilkinson's Hole, Buchan Stream, Upper and Lower Buchan, and Sauchie. From these pools some of the largest scores on record have been made, and when the water is right, from eight to twelve fish a day are often taken.

The late Lord Dupplin once had twenty-two fish in the day from the two streams of Dick's and Dupplin.

Mr. Brydges Willyams and Colonel Cornwall Leigh, fishing opposite each other, had in a short day twenty-five fish from these same streams. Here, also, I had the luck to get the only forty-pounder of my angling career, from the south bank of the tail of Lord Dupplin's stream; it took a small Blue Doctor of my own dressing on a No. 4 hook. I was alone, so had to gaff him for myself just opposite the Dupplin kitchen gardens, some three-quarters of a mile below where the fight began forty-five minutes earlier; and as, after that ended, I got seven others, of from nineteen to eight pounds, it was indeed a red-letter day.

The whole of this water, with the exception of Dick's from the north bank, can be fished dryshod. Like every other stretch of angling, whether good or bad, this one suffers equally with them all from

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\* Those who know these parts of the Earn will have no difficulty in recognising the man in the boat as Irvine, the popular and well-known head keeper at Dupplin.









DOFFIN WEIR AND CURVE



THE MOUNTAIN



the eccentricities of the clerk of the weather, and too much rain is just as bad as too little. The river here takes several days to clear from the effects of a real heavy flood, for the banks are mostly of earth, and liable to wash away in masses, and when that happens the water below is made extra muddy. Throughout the whole course of this river the banks want carefully watching and preserving, and those that show signs of "going" should be dealt with at once, for the neglect may entail not only the loss of a salmon pool or two, but an eventual heavy outlay where at first a small one would have sufficed to stop the whole mischief.

The Dupplin Reserved Water, with which is let the house of Aberdalgie, is now rented by Mr. A. Wynne Corrie, who, with his guests, took one hundred and forty-four fish out of it in this last season of 1899; thirteen was his best day, and the two heaviest weights were thirty-six and thirty-seven pounds. Mr. Corrie can use his pen as well

as his rod, and under the heading, "A Good Day," he sent the story of this one for publication in the *Fishing Gazette*, and, by the kindness of the editor, Mr. R. B. Marston, I am enabled to reprint the main points of this well-told story.

"The ground was dry and hard; not a sound came from the dried-up burn channels, and the faces of those forming the house party became longer and longer as the number of fishing days became shorter and shorter. But at length the rain came with a vengeance—a regular downpour of what is so well known as 'spate rain.' The third day's rain made us think 'When will it stop?' for the river had broken its usual bounds, acres of fields were under water, and we knew that three or four days would have to pass ere fishing would be possible.

"However, there was one thing to do daily, and that was to walk to the big dyke and see what fish were showing. What a sight it was! All the water immediately below the dyke seemed to be

alive with salmon, grilse, and sea trout, and it is no exaggeration to say that well over thirty fish were often visible at once, while in the quieter



THE DUPPEN HUT.

places they lay packed together with their back fins out of water. At length the river ran down enough to make sport as much a certainty as it ever can

be in salmon fishing, and eagerly we sought the hut in the morning, only to be told on getting there that 'a fish might be got,' but with such an east wind there was not much chance of a good day. Nothing daunted, I elected to go to the top of the water on the north bank, while a young nephew took the other side opposite to me, thus leaving the easily fished water near the hut for the ladies of our party. All being ready, I waded in, and sent a medium-sized Jock Scot on its deceitful errand. Well, the Jock searched about a hundred yards of water without result, so I reeled up and returned to the head of the pool. A Dusty Miller was next tried, but nothing but sea trout would look at it, so at the end of the pool I came out, gave up the rod, lit a pipe, and sat down to hold a council of war, and for a while my fisherman and I sprawled over the fly books.

"At last a Silver Doctor with a blue hackle caught my eye, and we stared at the page and then looked at each other: that was enough, only I



decided on putting up a size and a half larger than I had been using, saying, 'This is the size for salmon, the other was the size for trout.' Oddly enough, my remark proved to be true. I began again at the head of the pool, and had not made six casts when there came a pull, and I was 'fast,' and in about six minutes had a bright grilse kicking on the gravel. Back again to the same place, and away again went the fly. A few more casts, and then I fastened in another grilse and soon had him also on the bank. I was quickly on the water again, when there came another pull, but whether from grilse or salmon I know not, for we parted company; and so it went on: just a few casts, and I was either fast in a fish or lost one—until I had seven on the bank, salmon and grilse.

"Having given the pool a pretty good flogging, I determined to have a try in the next one below, a deep, strong pool with a narrow neck, at the top of which, on the north side, some piles have been driven in, causing a bit of gravel bank and some

fairly shallow water, standing in which one can work across and down the water. I waded in as far as I could and commenced with a short line. Suddenly in the heavy water I got a 'rug'—a pull—which, in spite of my having one finger on the line, nearly made me drop the rod. Only once or twice before had I had such a pull, and I hoped it meant a big fish. I got ashore as fast as I could, looked at my watch and found that it was nearly 2 p.m. The fish took out the line with a rush, and my reel fairly screamed (what a beautiful sound it is!), while I wondered where on earth—or rather where in water—the fish was making for, as he appeared to be going to a greater depth than I believed the water to be. After the first rush the fish dropped back towards the lower part of the pool, and I saw out of the tail of my eye that someone was coming with my lunch.

"At the same second the fish made a furious dash up-stream, and I followed, straining all I dared to pull his head sideways on to that narrowed

torrent. The strain told a bit even on him, for he wavered and hung unsteadily in the neck, and then turned and came towards me, only to show half of his length as he flung himself into the deepest part of the pool. We all then knew that I was fast in a big fish indeed, which we hoped would pull forty pounds. For twenty minutes he cruised about the pool, part of which time I employed in snatching a sandwich now and again from the packet held out to me, and was thinking of a drink, when the fish took command of my arrangements and altered them, for the strain was beginning to tell on him, and he commenced to fight slowly down the pool. I did not mind if he would only be good enough to come to the gaff in the next one, but if he left that and went on down the river, I knew I should be in a fix, as I could not wade much below it. The south bank is all right, but on the north there are stumps and branches of alder trees which project into the river, which is too deep for wading, while if you go ashore the fish will

probably swing in and foul the line on these stumps.

“Thus I had good cause for anxiety, and the event proved it, for within the next ten minutes the fish had gone down the next pool, and I was nearly filling my waders, when I came ashore just above the projecting branches and handed my watch over to my man. Then I waded in again, prepared to swim if necessary the sixty or eighty yards for which the obstacles extended, and below which I should get a clear run with the fish down to the next pool. Happily, however, the fish, which was now pretty well done, elected to sulk, so I contented myself with keeping a quiet, steady strain on him, and got out a whistle, which I always carry when I am fishing or shooting, and blew it ‘all I knew.’ Ere long, in response to this and the shouts which my man and I raised, my nephew and his ghillie came in sight on the opposite bank, and I asked them to get hold of the other fisherman, if he could be spared by the ladies for awhile, and to bring a boat up to me.

It was only about four hundred yards, but it was just half an hour before the boat shot across to me, and it had been real hard work for the two men and my nephew; but when I grasped the boat and hauled myself inboard, and took the rod back from the fisherman who had held it while I did so, I felt that barring accidents the fish was mine. We soon were put over to the south side, where we were joined by the ladies, and in the next pool below (in which a fish is more easily killed and gaffed on that side than on the north) the battle came to an end, and a fine cock fish of thirty-six pounds lay on the bank, just one hour and eighteen minutes from the time at which he was first booked.

"After he had been despatched by a blow from the 'priest,' it did not take long for me to get put across the river, and, after a whiskey and soda and a small piece of cake, to get back to the head of the pool at which I had commenced that morning. Five more fish did that pool give me before I reeled up

and went home ; not to the fly which had killed the big one, as that had been chewed for so long that the tinsel had begun to come away, but to one a half-size larger.

"And thus came to an end my best day's salmon fishing, yielding seven salmon and six grilse, weighing respectively 36, 26½, 15½, 14, 13, 11, 9, 8½, 7, 7, 5½, 5, and 5 lbs.—a real good day, to be marked with a white stone, and one which will ever remain in my memory, to be often mentally repeated, while the cast of the thirty-six-pounder will always be a visible token, provocative, perhaps, of the story of its capture, and of the hope that some day that forty-pounder of which I dream may be brought to bank after giving as good sport."

As the fishing hut on the Reserved Water is a specimen, both inside and outside, of the most serviceable and workmanlike one I have ever seen, I have given an illustration of it as a guide to those who may wish to put up shelters on other anglings.

The lessee of this section also usually has the right of a day or two a week on Dupplin Loch, a pretty circular sheet of water surrounded by woods, where the trout give fine sport and delicious eating; in fact, for the table they are the very best in all Scotland. They run from a pound up to four pounds—nearly three pounds is the average—so, therefore, the angler cannot expect to take several dozen of these big fellows in the day; but one three-pounder is worth a great many small fish, and thus quality more than makes up for quantity. I have fished this loch a few times, and my best day was five trout weighing seventeen pounds.

The Dupplin Lower Water begins at the Reserved ends, and goes down to a little below the Caledonian Railway Bridge. There are seven good pools on it, viz., Lower Sauchie, Condie, Sauchie Dyke, Mains, Forgandenny, the Ford, and Bridge Pool. It is chiefly slow-flowing water, which often holds very heavy fish—six to one rod in a day is the best ever done on it in recent years.

and the average take is from forty to sixty each season.

With regard to the best flies for the Earn, as the river is hard fished by many anglers, there is scarcely a pattern that is not given a chance. The Doctors, Dusty Miller, Wilkinson, Willyams, Jock Scot, Claret, Yellow and Blue Wasps, Shannon, Winterton, Benchill, with Mr. Kelson's Red Drake, D'Eresby, the Kendle, Black Fancy and Variegated Sun Fly, are as good a selection as is possible. Personally, I hardly used any others than my own pattern of Blue Doctor,\* the Willyams and a Dusty Miller, dressed on irons ranging from two inches down to the very smallest.

For the past few years Sir Robert Moncrieffe has worked hard to carry through a scheme for improving the Earn anglings, by renting the cruive and net fishings, by putting easily negotiated fish passes in Dupplin and Strathallan Dykes, and by lengthening

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\* See Vol. II., "River Awe."



the weekly close time, so as to permit many more fish to ascend the river. Although this excellent idea is not actually an accomplished fact, I believe there is but little doubt that it will soon become one, and then the Earn will be turned into a purely sporting river, which, instead of giving only two months of autumn sport, will yield fish to the angler from the opening day on the 11th of February, and under such circumstances it should become one of the most valuable and most sought after of any in Scotland.

In taking leave of the Earn, mention may be made of an old agreement, which shows once again how cheap salmon were a hundred and fifty years ago. It runs as follows, and is dated the 17th of November, 1746 :—

"I have this day let my fishing on the water of Earn to William Johnman, at the Boat of Innerdunning, for payment of eight salmon, or half a crown for each twelve grilises, or nine pence for each ten pikes and twenty trouts, or three pence for each.

This agreement made before Will Gloag, writer in Dunning, and George Bruce, of Innerdunning."

To this is appended the following memorandum:—

"30th May, 1748. — Lent to Will Johnman 5*s* 6*d.*, for which he is to repay me at St. John's Day, and I am to give him an abatement of the price of the salmon, because they are so cheap in Perth."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE RUEL AND THE ECKAIG, AND LOCH LUCK

THESE two pretty streams drain the Cowal peninsula formed by Loch Fyne on the west and Loch Long on the east. The Ruel, which drains thirty-three square miles, unlike the Eckaig, has no loch to feed it, and rising in the parish of Kilmoden, it has a run of thirteen miles before it falls into the salt water of Loch Ridden, which opens into the Kyles of Bute, opposite the northern extremity of the island. Colonel Burnley Campbell, of Ormidale, and Mr. R. Campbell, of Glendaruel, are the chief proprietors, the former owning the lower water and the latter the upper.

The river opens on the 16th of February, the nets work till the 1st of September, and the rods

fish on till the 31st of October. It is a late river, and neither salmon nor sea trout run until about the middle of June, while the cream of it is from the middle of July to the end of the season. The river is well off for bridges, there being stone ones at Bealach-an-draighionn, Dunans and Clachan, with various foot-bridges on the Glendaruel and Ormidale estates. A sixteen-foot rod will cover the water, and no waders are wanted. Most of the standard flies kill, medium-sized Jock Scot, Butcher, Silver Doctor and Brown Turkey being the favourites, and they are the principal lures, although at times minnow, worm and prawn will be more effective.

There are plenty of pools in the Ormidale water, which extends for two miles on both banks, and a further mile on the right one. Many of these pools have no names; but Lynn-na-Cloich (the Bell Pool), the Goose Pool and Cui-allinsionn are the three best. This last named has been christened the "Collusion," partly for brevity and partly for the comfort of Sassenach tongues.



The Beach



The Path to the House





THE COLLISON POOL



THE RIVER ABOVE ORSINDALE HOUSE





The river is well off in the matter of the netting arrangements, for Colonel Campbell owns the right on the west side of Loch Ridden, and wisely rents that on the east, so he is therefore always in a position to ensure a good stock of fish to the Ruel whenever the river is in order. Showery weather suits it best, though it runs right for fully two days after a summer flood, while in September and October there is usually quite enough rain to keep it going almost daily.

Sea trout average from one pound up to four, and salmon and grilse from seven to ten pounds. Twenty-three pounds is the heaviest ever got on the Ormidale reach. In 1882, Colonel Campbell caught on—

August 1st	..	56	sea trout	..	62	lbs.
.. 2nd	..	41	" "	..	22½	"
.. 22nd	..	54	" "	..	42½	"
September 5th		40	" "	..	30	"
.. 25th		28	" "	..	20	"
					<hr/>	
					219	sea trout. 177 lbs.

In 1883—

July 12th ..	9 sea trout ..	22½ lbs.
August 10th ..	33 " " ..	41 "
" 27th ..	27 " " ..	26 "
October 19th ..	7 salmon ..	53 "
" " ..	3 sea trout ..	1½ "

In this season the Colonel fished for twenty-two days, when his total catch was—

22 salmon .. .. 188 lbs.

178 sea trout .. .. 185 lbs.

The large sea trout run first, and commence to come in July, although in some seasons they run smaller than in others: 1882 was a small year, while in 1883 they ran a better size. Nearly the whole of the above were taken with the fly—the seven salmon with the same Jock Scot. Sport on this river is even better now than in the above-mentioned years, for in the days of these scores Colonel Campbell had not rented the nets working on the east shores of Loch Ridden, as in 1884 he went to reside on another property, and did not

return to Ormidale until 1898, when, having the opportunity, he secured the monopoly of the netting; and under these circumstances, when the Ruel is in order, it is perhaps the best river of its size in these parts.

In 1755, an extraordinary fight between the lairds of Ormidale and Glendaruel took place on the banks of the Ruel under the following circumstances, and as it was a fight about salmon, I have copied the story by permission from Lord Archibald Campbell's "*Records of Argyll*."

"It appears that the Campbells of Ormidale and Glendaruel had no liking for each other, and there were often brawls taking place betwixt the two parties, who were about equal in numbers. At length matters came to a climax in this wise: about a mile up the river, Ormidale put a dam across the Ruel for the purpose of driving the wheel of a wauking-mill for thickening and dressing cloth after it came from the loom. The mill was not long in operation before Glendaruel saw he had a good

opening for raising a quarrel with his neighbour chieftain, Ormidale, declaring war against him if he did not take down the dam; and that if he did not do so in a very short time, it would be done for him by hands that were both able and willing.

"Ormidale treating this message with silent contempt, Glendaruel then sent a second one, saying that the dam was an impediment to salmon ascending the Ruel up to his domains, and that if it were not down the next day, it would not be there the following one. Ormidale being inflexible in the matter, Glendaruel's men made a breach in the centre of the dam in the night time; but Ormidale sent men the next day, who repaired the damage in a few hours, but not without being molested by having stones thrown at them by the Glendaruel clan. The dam was broken down again during the following night, and again repaired during the day, but some hard fighting went on all the time; and the next

day Glendaruel sent a letter to Ormidale, as follows:—

“*ESKACHACHAN, August 7th, 1755.*

“*SIR,—I will have no more child's play, but I and one hundred men will appear on the eastern side of the river, at the dam, between ten and eleven o'clock forenoon, to-morrow; and you bring the same number of men, but no more, otherwise you are a coward and void of honour. Have but the same number of men which I will have, and if I may feel inclined to do so I will drown you and all your unspirited men in your own dam, and make all your bodies food for the fish of the river. At all events, I shall have the dam down to-morrow; and to confirm my words I now kiss the sword.\**”

“The next morning was a very fine one, and the horn was sounded very early from one end of the Glen to the other, and the same was done in Ormidale. Long before the time mentioned, more

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\* The most solemn asseveration that a Highlander could take.

than double of the number wanted came in haste to their respective chiefs, but only one hundred of the best and stoutest men were picked out for the fight by both parties. At the appointed time, Glendaruel and his men made their appearance at the dam on the eastern side of the river, whilst Ormidale's braves stood face to face to their foes on the western bank. Every man of both parties was armed with cudgels, and the Glendaruel men were provided with implements for the demolishing of the dam, which was to be done, or die in the struggle.

"Glendaruel, with three of his sons standing by his side, cried over the water to Ormidale. 'Come on now, and I will teach you how to fight!' With that, Glendaruel's men went into the water for the purpose of demolishing the fish barrier; but Ormidale and his men were ready to prevent any such thing to be done. The chief himself was the first to rush into the water, followed by his men, and in a twinkling a terrible struggle was in full swing.

"Two of Glendaruel's sons were seen to rush at Ormidale and strike him on the face with their sticks, cutting him so severely that his face was covered with blood. The Ormidale men on seeing this became perfectly wild, and the fight became more furious and desperate. Some were fighting with their fists, others with sticks, some were in grips and tumbling over each other in the water; but the majority of them on both sides were hard at work throwing stones at each other. This awful work went on for a considerable time; and had it not been that someone ran to Clachan and told the minister—the Rev. Mr. Forbes—about the fight that was going on, many lives would have been lost that day. But the reverend gentleman at once made all haste to the scene of battle, and in a short time—but not without some danger to himself—succeeded in getting the parties separated.

"Thus there was not a single life lost, though there was not one of the two hundred men but what was made in a sad state with many cuts, bruises,

black eyes and the loss of much blood ; so much so, indeed, that the water of the river was made red with it as it ran into the sea loch, and tradition says it was through this event that it was called Loch Redden—since turned into Loch Ridden. There was no breach made in the dam that day, and it was eventually settled in a Court of Justice, held at Dunoon, that Ormidale should erect box steps in the dam, to let the fish up by leaping from one trough to another, as fish know how to do."

Nearly a hundred and fifty years have lapsed since the fight just described. Time has banished all feelings of animosity, and for many years past the Ormidales and the Glendaruels have lived on the very best of terms.

The Eckraig drains forty-one square miles, and flowing from Loch Eck, it has but a five-mile course ere it falls, at Kilmun, into the salt water of the Holy Loch, a branch of the lengthy Loch Long. The whole of the river, with the fishing rights,



belongs to Mr. H. J. Younger, of Benmore, who preserves it strictly, and though that fact is pretty well known, yet hardly a day passes without his receiving troublesome applications for leave to fish. Sea trout run in May and June, salmon and



LOCH ECK

finnocks in July and August, and grilse in June and July. Salmon average ten pounds, grilse six pounds, and sea trout one and a half pounds. They do not stay very long in the river, but pass up into Loch Eck, a fine sheet

of water some seven miles in length by one in breadth.

There are two hotels—those of Loch Eck and Whistlefield—on its shores, each having the right of letting out boats on the loch from Mr. Leschallas, the owner of the Glenfinnart estate on the east side of the loch, the whole of the west shore belonging to Mr. Younger. The Loch Eck Hotel is the more southern of the two, but good sport is had from each of them.

The Fishery Board Report of 1891 states that—

25 salmon	..	..	..	254 lbs.
8 grilse ..	..	..	..	48 ..
198 sea trout	..	..	..	396 ..
5 salmo ferox .	..	..	..	26 ..
249 loch trout	..	..	..	115 ..

were caught by the hotel boats in that year, the heaviest salmon being twenty-five pounds, the heaviest sea trout four pounds, and the heaviest loch trout five pounds.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE BORDER ESK

Rises on Eskdalemuir in the high hills dividing the counties of Dumfries and Selkirk, with a course of forty miles and a drainage area of four hundred and thirty-one square miles, of which three hundred and nine are in Scotland and one hundred and twenty-two in England. It falls into the head of the Solway Firth, eight miles to the east of the Annan. A few miles above Longtown it ceases to be a Scotch river and enters English soil, from which point to the sea is a distance of six miles.

The Esk has upwards of twenty tributaries, some of which hold salmon and sea trout, the chief one being the Liddel, which joins the Esk on the left bank three miles above Longtown.

The greater part of this river and its affluents is in the hands and under the protection of the Esk and Liddel Fisheries Association, a model institution formed in 1863, having for its proprietary members the Duke of Buccleuch, Sir Richard Graham, of Netherby, Sir Frederick Johnstone, and Messrs. W. E. Malcolm, Richard Bell, G. Mounsey, and Thomas Beattie. The Association issues season, monthly, weekly, and daily tickets at a very small charge, the cost of a whole-season ticket being but four guineas, which gives the right for nearly all the river and its affluents, and though some portions of both are kept by the respective owners for their own use, they are neither extensive nor numerous. Likewise the Association rents the nets on the lower waters, and their removal has greatly benefited the angling, which is looked after by four water bailiffs, who also see that the rules are observed, the chief ones being that no bait or minnow fishing is permitted on the Esk and Liddel till the 1st of May, or after the 15th of

September; that no angling is allowed between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m., and that no gaff be used before the 1st of April. Rod fishing on the tributaries closes on the 1st of October, but is continued on the Esk and Liddel up to the 31st of that month.

I have fished the water from Longtown to the tide, and venture to suggest that it would be to the advantage of all the ticket-holders if a strict rule were made prohibiting any one from beginning to fish a stream below an angler already casting it. This was an experience I had to put up with several times in the two days I fished this water, but as I was only there for such a short time, I did not make any representations to the Association, although it would deter me from going there again.

In 1891, the secretary of the fishery, Mr. R. McGeorge, solicitor, Langholm, reported that the heaviest salmon caught was thirty-seven pounds, and the heaviest sea trout five pounds.

The Esk and the Liddel open for the rod on the 15th of February, but as the Esk suffers equally with the Annan from the evils already



THE ESK AT TANGROTH.

mentioned although there are at times a few spring fish taken—the angling is not of much account before the end of July. June and July are best for sea trout, and July and August for

herling. Wading stockings and a sixteen-foot rod will enable anglers to cover the pools.

All the small standard flies kill; perhaps the Silver Grey is the best, but for salmon and sea trout flies, the latter differing somewhat from the usual patterns, the angler contemplating a visit to these parts cannot do better than lay in a stock from Mr. Robert Raine, the tackle maker of Botchergate, Carlisle.

Each season there is a certain amount of disease, but there are no obstructions or pollutions to speak of, and the river is one well worthy of the angler in want of moderate sport at a small cost, but the locals are very smart performers, and the stranger will have to work hard. However, here, as elsewhere, they don't know everything, and those who have gained their experiences in many rivers will hold their own.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE FORTH AND THE TEITH.

THE first-named is the fifth largest of the Scotch rivers, and, draining eight hundred and eighty square miles, it is formed at Aberfoyle by the junction of the Duchray, which rises from Benlomond, and the Avondhu, which flows out of the well-known trouting lochs of Chon and Ard. From this junction to the salt water at Alloa it has a remarkably twisting run of about thirty miles. For the first ten, below the confluence of the head waters down to Cardross, it is fairly streamy and quick-running, and here, late in autumn, there are always some salmon to be met with, though not a great many. The Duke of Montrose and Major Erskine, of Cardross, are the chief owners of this part.



Below Cardross the river runs deep and sluggish, and for the next ten miles or so it is only fit for pike and perch, of which there are plenty. Then the Teith falls in on the left bank, and between this point and Stirling large numbers of fish are



THE OLD BRIDGE OF FORTH.

netted during the season, and not until the nets are removed is there any angling, though after that there are at times some good takes made by the rod. Nevertheless, the Forth at this part is by no means an ideal river to fish, being both sluggish

and muddy; yet the angler has the consolation of knowing that he has a good chance of a fight with a real big fellow, for every year the nets get fish weighing over fifty pounds (fifty-eight pounds is, I believe, the heaviest), and the rods catch them from thirty to forty-five pounds.

There is a good deal of pollution at and below Stirling, which may perhaps account for disease being more prevalent than it should be, for in the two spawning seasons of 1895 and 1896, upwards of two thousand fish, chiefly cocks, were removed from the river.

The shores of the Firth are very severely worked by bag and stake nets, while the Firth itself is harried by the detestable hang nets.\* The whole of these sea fishings are let for about £3,700 a season, and the Fishery Board Report of 1882 puts their average yield at four thousand salmon and one thousand two hundred grilse, while the

\* Recently declared illegal. See "Annan," this volume.

rods got a total of two hundred of both kinds, but there must be an error in these figures, and probably the take of grilse should have been put down at twelve thousand instead of one thousand two hundred! Of recent years the net renters have refused to make any return of their takes to the Fishery Board, or to anyone else; this is information which the owners of the net fishings should insist on having; while it would also be greatly to the interests of the rivers and of the upper proprietors if every tacksman was compelled to make a return of the numbers of fish caught in his nets.

Fish cannot ascend far up either of the head-water streams of the river, there being severe and impassable falls on the Duchray and in the stream from Loch Ard. On this last-named water the obstruction might be overcome at a small cost, which would let fish into Loch Ard; but it has never been attempted, because a strong preference is shown for the

Duchray water, and very few run up the Loch Ard river.

The chief angling of the district is on the Teith tributary, a clear, rapid stream with plenty of fine gravelly spawning ground, which the fish like much better than the muddy, dull-running Forth.

The Teith rises from two streams, the northern one issuing from the Braes of Balquhiddy and flowing through Lochs Doine, Voil and Lubnaig, and then rushing impetuously through the pass of Leny, joins the southern one at Callander, which flows through Lochs Katrine, Achray and Venacher. Therefore, from the junction of the two streams the Teith, receiving the overflow of these six lochs, keeps in good angling order for a considerable time, and from Callander down to Doune, a distance of about twelve miles, there are a series of fine streams and pools, whose chief owners are Lord Ancaster, Mr. J. B. Baillie-Hamilton, of Cambusmore, Sir Robert Jardine and Mr. Buchanan Hamilton. Below Doune the Teith

begins to flow slower and slower, as it wends its way to join the Forth, until in the last mile or so it becomes very deep, with hardly any stream.

Between Callander and Doune, March and April are the best months for angling, and on this reach, forty or fifty years ago, the sport used to be first-rate; but nowadays, chiefly owing to Craigforth cruive and the netting below, it is not up to much.

The owner of one of the best angling stretches of the Teith bemoans the present sad state of affairs as follows: "I fear my experiences are now of little value. The poor river has been destroyed—or fished out. Twenty-five years ago I could catch a score or more of beautiful spring salmon with my own rod and without assistance; the bag this year (to the 12th of May, 1900) is *nil*! Twenty-five years ago there were about fifteen nets between Stirling and the estuary; now there are over a hundred! Here is a nut for the Royal Commission to crack."

Another gentleman writes as follows: "I and a friend some years ago rented a stretch of water on the Teith, below Callander, but it was so bad



THE TEITH FROM BOUNS CASTLE.

that the agents took it off our hands. Callander itself is full of the most arrant poachers. The water we had was very nice to look at, but devil a fish in it, and we never got one."

Below Doune, August and September are the best months. Salmon can push their way right up into Loch Doil, at the head of the Teith, but they are not often caught there, although Loch Lubnaig frequently yields fish to the minnow.

Wading stockings are useful in fishing the Teith between its exit from Loch Lubnaig and Doune. Any of the small standard patterns will kill, and a rod of fourteen feet will cover the streams and pools.

Both rivers open on the 11th of February, and have the usual close times going with that date.

The angling of both the Forth and the Teith is much spoilt by the Craigforth cruive, two miles above Stirling; not that the cruive boxes themselves catch such a vast lot of salmon, but the dyke

obstructs the whole river and forces the fish to congregate below it, where they are swept up by nets and cobbles.

The annexed illustration, for which I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. W. L. Calderwood, the Inspector of Salmon Fisheries, and which is copied from his Fishery Board Report of 1898, will show the formidable nature of this cruive, and it is good news to hear that in Mr. Calderwood's opinion there is some doubt as to its being legally placed. In any case its existence is very harmful to the rivers above it, and it seems a pity the upper proprietors do not subscribe together and buy it up.\*

I cannot leave this subject without congratulating Mr. Calderwood on the happy thought of illustrating his Reports by photography. The Fishery Board Reports ought to be read by every angler, but they have hitherto been somewhat dry perusal, which

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\* See "Deveron Cruives," Vol. II.











illustrations such as those given with the 1868 Report would render more amusing.

A little below where the Teith falls in the Forth is joined on the same bank by another considerable stream, the Allan, up which a few fish poke their way in autumn, and down which very few ever return, for the Allan banks are pretty thickly populated. It is not worth mentioning as an angling river, and it would be just as well for the fish if they were barred from ever entering it.

It would hardly be right to take leave of the Forth District without a short mention of the Howietown piscicultural establishment, the most important in the kingdom. Started by Sir James Gibson Maitland in 1873, year by year he improved and extended it so cleverly and so successfully that it has ultimately grown into a large commercial business. Here salmon, Loch Leven trout, the fontinalis, or American brook trout, common trout and char are hatched and reared by thousands, for there are upwards of forty

hatching houses and ponds covering many acres, from which millions of eyed ova have been safely packed and sent to distant parts of the world. In 1887 the manager reported the exportation to New Zealand of 576,000 salmon ova obtained from the Forth, Tay and Tweed Districts, all of which arrived in good condition. Land-locked salmon and rainbow trout were imported in 1899, and previously Loch Leven trout had been crossed with salmon and recrossed again with Loch Levens, the cross proving fertile and producing the largest fry in the fishery, and thus it appears likely that trout may be considerably increased in size by introducing salmon blood without loss of fertility. Fish are kept for sale of all sizes up to several pounds, and it may interest my readers to know that trout ova usually takes seventy-one days to hatch, while that of the salmon requires six days longer.

CHAPTER XI.  
THE LUCE.

DRAINS seventy-three square miles and falls into Luce Bay after a run of about twenty. It is formed by two streams, the Main Water of Luce and the Cross Water of Luce, which unite six and a half miles from the sea. The Earl of Stair owns both these upper streams, keeps them in his own hands, and preserves them strictly. Below the junction and down to the sea the Luce belongs on both banks to Mr. J. C. Cuninghame, of Dunragit, and this is the best part of the angling, being alternately shallow and streamy, with twenty pretty pools, of which the best are Puddle Hole, Twenty-ninth Stream, the Lady's Cast, Flynn's Took, Smiddyholm, Geordie's Dub, Gabsnout Took, the Long Pool of Craig, and Craig

Corner. The Long Pool takes about an hour to fish, and the others less time.

Wet weather suits the river, as, owing to the good drainage of the sheep pastures, it runs down



THE PUDDLE HOLE IN LOW WATER.

very quickly. The standard patterns of flies are used, a sixteen-foot rod will do the work, and stockings are necessary. Eight salmon and grilse is the record score for one day on Dunragit water,



where the salmon average ten pounds and the grilse six, while the heaviest fish ever caught on it weighed thirty-six pounds. In the first three miles of the river sea trout are often plentiful and heavy. Mr. Ashley Dodd, when he rented Balkail, had no less than a hundred in one night's angling, and it is to him that I am indebted for the following account of this wonderful catch, which is as follows:—

“A friend and I began fishing in the Puddle Hole on a clear, starlight evening between August 15th and 25th, over twenty years ago, at which time I rented the whole of the fishing rights from the then owner. As it became dark the sea trout began to rise well, and we had made a good bag, though nothing extraordinary, when my friend, who was going to shoot next day, retired about 11 p.m. I kept at it for another three-quarters of an hour, and then laid down till about one o'clock in the cottage of the water bailiff close to the Puddle Hole, which, by the way, was twice as big in those

days as it is now. Beginning again in the same place, the fun recommenced about 1.30, and the average size of the fish that were on the rise was much larger than before. As it became light the rises fell off, and I had the bag counted and was told it was ninety-nine. By this time I despaired of another rise, but, spurred by the desire to make up the hundred, I went to a fast little run by a rock just above the pool, which was quite still water, and at once got into something heavy. This turned out to be the boss of the bag, weighing six pounds, and by the time it was landed the rays of the rising sun were beginning to show over Balkail Fell. Of the hundred, there were thirty which were over two and a half pounds, and the whole lot must have averaged one and a half pounds, but they were distributed quite early in the morning and were never weighed as a whole, and only the big ones were weighed separately."

In 1899, Mr. J. G. Walker, fishing from Balkail one night, caught over sixty sea trout of







THE PYDIE HOLE IN FLOOD



THE BOAT POOL, DUNDEE



about the same heavy weights, while on the 16th of September, 1899, he also took from the Puddle Hole eight salmon and grilse, averaging seven pounds. From this pool also large takes of sea trout have been made by Lord Eglinton, Captain William Cuninghame, of Belmont, and Mr. Archibald Walker.

The Luce is a late river for salmon, clean fish rarely putting in an appearance before quite the end of July. Sea trout, however, commence to run in June. Both salmon and trout are large for the size of the river, which is fairly dealt with in the matter of its estuary, as on one side of the mouth there are no bag nets closer than 650 yards and none nearer than 1,300 yards on the other. There are likewise neither pollutions nor obstructions, and the Luce when in order is as pretty a little river to fish as any in Scotland. With regard to the Dunragit angling, it should be mentioned that Mr. Cuninghame keeps it in his own hands and preserves it strictly.

Considering that clean fish do not put in an appearance until the end of July, it is a puzzle to understand why the Luce should be declared open for netting and angling on the 25th of February. The nets fish to the 10th of September, and the rods continue to the 31st of October.



## CHAPTER XII.

## THE NITH

RANKS in point of size as one of the largest of the second class salmon rivers of Scotland, but as it is one of the very worst treated, it is, perhaps, not surprising that its salmon fisheries are among the least productive. It drains four hundred and thirty-five square miles of moorland and low country, and rising in Ayrshire, not far from Dalmellington, after a course of fifty miles, in which it receives many tributaries, it enters the Solway three miles below the town of Dumfries. As it nears the sea the Cluden water joins on the right bank, which salmon ascend in numbers until their further progress is barred by the Rocks of Cluden, some four miles above the junction with the Nith.

The pool below the rocks is fished by a net fastened between two long poles, and which elsewhere I have heard called a "poke" or "clap" net. There is a man to each pole, and, holding the net partially taut, they thrust it into every corner of the pool. As the fish see it, they dash out of the pool into the net, in which there is a pocket to receive them. The men can feel the fish strike the net, and raise it at once, bringing the poles as near together as they can. With this net, from this one pool, four hundred fish were taken in the season of 1881, fifty-six being the best day.

Now, some thirty years ago I have often helped to work a similar net on a more northern river. We did it, perhaps, once or twice in a remote glen, before the netting season was ended, and only with a view of getting a fish or two for the house. But on each occasion we sent a keeper above and another below to warn us of the advent of the water bailiff, for we all *thought* we were poaching.

and it was not until some years later that the open working of this sort of net on the Cluden told me our conclusions were erroneous. Well! if this style of fishing isn't poaching, it ought to be!

The Nith is one of the latest of the Scotch rivers, fish seldom coming into it before May or June. Nevertheless, it opens on the 25th of February, closing for nets on the 10th of September, and for rods on the 14th of November—oddly enough, one day earlier than the Annan close by. I am not the only one who wonders why!

A striking proof of this lateness was afforded on the 8th of December, 1883, when a considerable portion of the lower water was netted to get a supply of ova for Mr. Armistead's hatchery. The result was but one hen fish ready to spawn, and she was put back, as not one of the cocks was in the same condition, and all the other fish netted that day were clean and fresh run.

The main take of salmon is in July, while in August the bulk of the grilse are netted. The Nith always yields some heavy fish each year, generally one or two of forty pounds or over, and several between thirty and forty, and many between twenty and thirty. In 1897 a forty-pound fish was caught by the rod, and in 1898 one of forty-three pounds was got in the nets.

The Nith also has the reputation of yielding the heaviest fish ever caught to the rod, as in 1812, on the Barjarg water, an old poacher, one Jock Wallace, hooked a fish in the Clog Pool about 8 a.m., and played it down to the Barjarg Boat Pool, where some workmen gaffed it for him at 6 p.m., when only two *hairs* of Wallace's casting line remained. The fish was at once taken to Barjarg Tower and weighed in the presence of Mr. Hunter Arundell, the proprietor, and he, with some others who were present, signed a certificate of the weight, a copy of which is still in the family, testifying that this fish was sixty-seven

pounds! Lucky Jock Wallace, with his line of twisted horschair, and probably a home-made rod!

In addition to being injured fully as much, if even not more than is the Annan, by the whammle, paidle and other Solway nets, as described in the chapter dealing with the last-named river, the poor Nith is the receptacle of the Dumfries sewage and of the pollutions of all the numerous mills and factories both in the town itself and on the banks of the river above and on its tributaries.

A Dumfries tacksman in 1891 gave his evidence as follows to the Clerk of the Nith District Board: "When the river is low, I consider the pollutions the sole cause of deterioration. Scarcely a fish will run up, and I have seen them at the ford at the New Quay making back to the sea on Monday mornings after meeting the refuse from the mills. The dyes are plainly seen in the water: they are seen of various colours at different times—black, violet, drab—and at Castle Dykes I have seen

several colours at one time. During the six weeks of drought I have seen the water black from bank to bank—so black that a piece of white paper could not be seen a foot deep; and what with the sewage and the mill effluents, the smell is so bad that I could compare the river to nothing but a stinking canal."

There are likewise upwards of twenty-five mill dams on the Nith and its tributaries, many of which being unprovided with fish passes are complete obstructions to their ascent, while such things as hecks on the mill lades are nearly unknown.

In his report of 1897, Mr. W. E. Archer indulges in some plain speaking, and writes of the Nith as follows: "It is not surprising that the salmon fisheries of the Nith are so unproductive, seeing the difficulties with which the parent salmon have to contend in ascending the river and the large extent of spawning ground from which they are entirely excluded. During the open season comparatively few salmon escape capture owing to

the serious obstruction caused by Dumfries Cauld and to the netting which is prosecuted below it. During the close season those salmon which succeed in ascending Dumfries Cauld are cut off by impassable obstructions from the spawning grounds in most of the tributary streams. In fact, since I visited Sands river in 1883 (Norway), I have not seen a salmon river where greater difficulties have been placed in the way of salmon reaching the natural spawning grounds in most of the tributary streams, or where, if steps were taken for the improvement of the fishings similar to those adopted on Sands river, they would be more likely to lead to the same successful results."

The Duke of Buccleuch is the largest proprietor and owns fully twenty miles of both banks. The best angling waters are on his Grace's property, and, commencing at Nith Bridge, close to Thornhill, they extend from there to the county march with Ayrshire. The cream of it is between this bridge and the town of Sanquhar, about a dozen

miles of splendid streams, interspersed with ideal pools.

The six miles above Nith Bridge up to Enterkin Foot the Duke keeps in his own hands, the best pools perhaps being Red Brow, Scaur Foot, Boat Pool and Matthews Pool. The whole of the angling lying above that point he lets to the Upper Nith Angling Association at Sanquhar, who issue tickets to residents and visitors for very small sums.

Likewise below Nith Bridge the Duke lets the angling to the Mid Nith Association, which goes down to the Closeburn march and includes the tributaries of the Scaur, Cample and Shinnel.

Other stretches on the Nith lying below the Closeburn water, of two pools only, are Blackwood, with the Forest Head and Bridge Pools: no fish killed on these in 1899. Friar's Carse has only the Riding Stone Pool, which did not yield a fish last year. Portrack has one pool: two fish killed last year. Cowhill with two pools, the Boat and





ms. notes, 1871, written by

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 all sums.

Like the below Nith Bridge the Duke lets  
 an to the Mid Nith Association, which



Louisa's Coast



the Tooth, were both blank last year. Carnsalloch Water of Denholm's Wood and another pool were also both blank.

A gentleman who knows the river well writes me: "I am sorry to say the Nith is perhaps the worst river in Scotland for the impatient salmon fisher." Another excellent authority says: "It would be difficult to give an average of fish killed on any of the Nith waters—next to none would be the best description for them all. I am afraid that salmon fishing on the Nith is entirely done for. It is full of pike and grayling, which ought to be destroyed as far as possible, but the proprietors appear to take no interest in the river, few of them being anglers. For the last seven years it has been going back yearly, and last year was the very worst on record, and not a dozen fish killed on the whole river."

Wading trousers are wanted, and a rod of sixteen to eighteen feet. The flies are much the same as those in use on the Annan, viz., Brown

and Grey Turkey and Gled. Jock Scot kills well at times, and probably most of the standard patterns would do so if they were given a trial, and if there were fish to lay hold of them. The Grey Wing is the favourite in clear autumn water with the leaves coming down.

For all the flies used on the Nith, Dee, Annan, and Esk, I can from long experience strongly recommend John Jackson, of Queensberry Square, Dumfries, who ties right well and securely.

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE TAY, LOCH TAY, THE DOCHART,  
LOCHAY, LYON, GARRY AND  
TUMMEL.

THE Tay, the largest of the Scotch rivers, with a catchment basin of two thousand five hundred and ten square miles, only takes its name from where it flows out of Loch Tay, though its sources are fully forty miles distant from Kenmore, at the foot of that loch. It rises from springs and small streams welling from the slopes of Ben Lui, on the borders of Argyll and Perthshire. These unite a few miles above Crianlarich to form the Fillan, which flows into Loch Dochart, and issuing from thence as the River Dochart, it has a course of twelve miles and a catchment basin of one hundred and thirty square miles before it finds its way into

Loch Tay, at Killin. On leaving Loch Dochart, the river becomes a fairly big stream, flowing through a beautiful highland strath—

"Surrounded wi' bent an' wi' heather,  
Where muirrocks and pliver are rife,"

while on the right bank high above the river runs the Oban Railway.

With the exception of a mile below Loch Dochart, on the north bank, which belongs to Mr. E. G. Place, of Loch Dochart, the whole river is owned by Lord Breadalbane. His angling on the north bank for the first five miles below Mr. Place's march goes with the Suie shootings, while that of the south side is let to Luib Hotel, and is free to visitors there, who get the run of the fifteen good pools contained in this stretch. The last five miles of both sides of the Dochart go with the Auchlyne shootings.

Salmon commence to quit Loch Tay and push their way up the Dochart about the end of April, but from June to September is the chief angling



time, though naturally the fish caught in the last-named month are then turning colour.

Sport is uncertain, for this is a spate river, rising and falling with rapidity; but in wet seasons it usually gives sport any time after June. It must not, however, be lost sight of that just at this period of the year there will often be a whole month of dry weather. As a set-off, the angler on the Dochart will find plenty of trout, which are carefully preserved, all undersized ones having to be returned to the river. Salmon pass up into Loch Dochart, and even into the Fillan beyond, though of late years there have not been so many seen in the loch as formerly.

Wading stockings are useful, a sixteen-foot rod will cover the water, while the fly is the only lure permitted, the standard patterns being used, from No. 1 to the smallest size. A little above Killin the river passes over a series of small falls, none of which are high enough to prevent fish from running up.

The LOCHAY has a course of fifteen miles and is a considerable stream, draining fifty-four square miles of hill country ere it flows into the head of Loch Tay, a little to the north of the Dochart. Two miles above the mouth there is a fall of some seventy feet, which absolutely bars the ascent of fish; and though the waters above are a perfect type of a small salmon river, with good spawning grounds, it is very doubtful whether the outlay necessary for making these falls passable would ever repay itself. It has been estimated that it could be done for £1,000, but I think the attempt would eventually involve the expenditure of a much larger sum.

The angling between the falls and the loch goes with the Morenish shootings, but there is no real salmon fishing on it, and they have never been known to take a fly. In the late spring and summer a few red fish come up as far as the falls, and now and again one or two fall victims to the worm.

LOCH TAY, which belongs to Lord Breadalbane, is about sixteen miles in length and one in breadth, and is the only loch in Scotland in which salmon are killed in large numbers by the rod. From old records kept at Taymouth Castle, it would appear that up till the year 1630 the Castle larder was supplied by the net. The first mention of rod fishing on Loch Tay is in 1632, when Duncan Campbell, in Creitgarrow, is cautioned that he "shall not burne a blaze, or shoot a wasp (leister), or put a wande on the water of Tay." The fly is useless, all fish being taken by minnow trolling, and every sort and size of these are used.

The loch opens on the 15th of January, and is fished by twenty-one boats, distributed as follows: From Killin eastwards the first mile of the loch is reserved by Lord Breadalbane, and is fished by one boat; the Killin Hotel has six others, the Bridge of Lochay Hotel has three, the whole nine having the run of about seven miles of the west end of the loch. The Kenmore Hotel at

the east end has six boats, the Ardeonaig Inn on the south side, and that of Ben Lawers on the north, each have two boats, the whole ten fishing from where the Killin march ends to within a mile of Kenmore, which is also about seven miles; and then again Lord Breadalbane reserves the mile nearest to the outflow and to Taymouth Castle. Sometimes these reserved portions are let, and at others the Marquis keeps them in his own hands; and in good years each of these beats has shown some wonderful sport for those who like this sort of angling. I remember arriving one February day in 1873 at Killin and meeting a friend coming off the reserve water there with a bag of eleven splendid fish, the smallest nineteen pounds and the largest forty-one pounds. But I believe there have been even better days than that; while the best week on record was made by Colonel Murray, of Polmaise, on the reserved water at Kenmore, with thirty-one fish weighing six hundred pounds.

The following are the charges for the fishing : from the 15th of January to the 15th of April, for those residing in the hotels, 25*s.* a day, or £5 for the week, if taken by the week ; after the 15th of April, 20*s.* a day, or £3 a week.

Gentlemen residing in the county of Perth, but not staying in the hotels, pay 5*s.* a day in excess of these charges.

When the applications for boats exceed the number that are available, two gentlemen may occupy one boat and use one rod each at a charge of 15*s.* each per day.

Anglers keep all clean fish, which are usually gaffed, although every boat is provided with a landing net for taking out kelts. A charge of 3*s.* 8*d.* per day is made for each boatman. Anglers are not obliged to provide luncheon for them, but nevertheless they all do so, and are only cautioned against making the "allooance" of whisky too large. Each angler may use two rods, but he must fish for himself, keepers and

servants not being allowed to do so. Thus a week's trolling in Loch Tay, with the hotel bill, will come to about £15.

I once tried a week of it, having been frozen off the Dee in the middle of one February. Had it not been for the solicitations of a young friend whom I had taken up to Deeside to kill his first fish, I should have gone south and waited for better angling weather. However, he was bent on killing a fish somehow, and begged me to go to Loch Tay. In my six days I got only two fish, while he, a novice, who had never landed one, got nineteen, of which the heaviest was thirty-three pounds! Of course, a real good day of eight or ten fish would be exciting enough for anybody; but to sit cramped up in a boat in bitter cold weather day after day for nothing did not appeal to my ideas of sport.

Certainly the first rush of a Loch Tay fish is something very grand, and unlike anything that

takes place when one is hooked from the bank. There are already some fifty yards of line out, and away goes, perhaps, another fifty with one uncheckable rush—a result brought about by a double action, the fish running away from the boat and the boat running away from the fish, for in nine instances out of ten the minnow is seized when the boat is being pulled down wind, the minnow spinning more steadily and truly than when the boat is being rowed against a stiff breeze. As soon, however, as the boat can be reversed and brought to follow the fish, there should be no doubt as to the result, for a phantom has so many hooks, while triangles take such a tight grip, that if things go wrong after once getting on terms with the captive, it may almost always be put down to bad management.

Here are the takes made on the whole loch since 1870, and it will be seen to what extraordinary fluctuations it is subject:—

YEAR.	NUMBER OF SALMON.		AVERAGE WEIGHT.
1870	...	460	19 lbs. 13 ozs.
1871	...	114	19 " 14 "
1872	...	293	20 " 6 "
1873	...	779	22 " 13 "
1874	...	253	20 " 15 "
1875	...	913	21 " 14 "
1876	...	476	20 " 10 "
1877	...	869	20 " 2 "
1878	...	851	21 " 10 "
1879	...	356	22 " 12 "
1880	...	331	21 " 3 "
1881	...	347	20 " 15 "
1882	...	139	19 " 4 "
1883	...	461	19 " 11 "
1884	...	240	19 " 10 "
1885	...	398	20 " 8 "
1886	...	379	20 " 3 "
1887	...	227	19 " 5 "
1888	...	378	18 " 5 "
1889	} Not procurable, but not extraordinary		
1890			



After 1890 the loch was opened on the 15th of January instead of on the 11th of February, when eighty-one salmon were caught in the extended time, the total for 1891 being three hundred and twenty-five fish, with an average of eighteen pounds. From this date I am not able to give the total takes, but the proprietor of the Killin Hotel has kindly furnished me with those made from there, and if these numbers were doubled, it would not be far out of the actual total of the whole loch.

## TAKES FROM KILLIN HOTEL.

YEAR.	NUMBER OF SALMON.			AVERAGE WEIGHT.	
1892	...	140	...	18 lbs.	4 ozs.
1893	...	221	...	20 "	0 "
1894	...	132	...	19 "	3 "
1895	...	124	...	19 "	0 "
1896	...	116	...	18 "	9 "
1897	...	192	...	19 "	0 "
1898	...	118	...	19 "	0 "
1899	...	136	...	20 "	0 "

From the takes of these twenty-eight years it will be seen there have only been four very big seasons, viz., those of 1873, 1875, 1877, and 1878, the total of the four showing three thousand four hundred and twelve fish, which would give an average of forty-three fish per season to each of the twenty boats fishing the loch.

The other twenty-four years give a return of seven thousand five hundred and thirty-five fish, or an average of three hundred and fourteen per season, which gives each of the twenty boats about sixteen fish apiece. The four bumper years were also very good ones on the river Tay, while, oddly enough, 1880, a record season on the river, was but an average one on the loch. During the many happy days I have spent on Tayside I have lost no opportunity of trying to get some explanation of the reason of the four big years and then their total cessation, but up to the present no one has been able to account for the phenomena, or why they do not repeat themselves. Many of the most

experienced residents on Tayside attribute the falling off to several causes: (1) The introduction of the hang nets, which took more fish from the estuary than had ever before been captured by the ordinary method of netting; \* (2) The appearance in 1882 of disease in Loch Tay, by which large numbers of fish were killed; (3) A succession of mild winters continuing into February caused an absence of snow on the Lyon hills, making the river water warmer than the loch, thus diverting the run of fish from the loch to the Lyon, and there is no doubt this river holds more fish when its waters are of a higher temperature than those of the loch; nevertheless, the Lyon never yields any extraordinarily good takes to the rods in the spring, as surely it would do if the bulk of the Loch Tay fish ran up it; (4) That of late years the loch has not been so hard fished as it was prior to 1880.

\* These hang nets have now been declared illegal by decision of the House of Lords, June, 1900.

Although these four reasons may help to explain the falling off on Loch Tay, it can hardly be asserted they entirely account for it. This season of 1900 was the worst on record, only eighty-nine fish having been caught in the whole loch, with a mean weight of eighteen and three-quarter pounds, the two heaviest, of thirty-nine pounds and thirty-five pounds, falling respectively to Mr. Paterson, fishing from Bridge of Lochay Hotel, and Mr. Holder, from Kenmore. This very poor total is attributed to the severe cold and low water of the early season, which stopped fish from running up, keeping them in the lower reaches about Stanley, where more were captured than for the last five-and-twenty springs.

Thus the angling of Loch Tay is the cause of a large sum of money being spent along its shores in the winter months. From the 15th of January to the 15th of April there is seldom a boat unoccupied, and taking these twelve weeks at £15 a boat per week, including the hotel bill

and luncheons, etc., and assuming there are just twenty boats, the total comes to £3,600, not to mention the money spent on travelling, and on rods, tackle, etc.

#### THE TAY.

For the first mile and a half after leaving the loch the Tay flows in a fine broad stream through the grounds of Taymouth, or Balloch Castle, as it is still called by the natives. History relates that when the Campbells wished to build a residence at the east end of Loch Tay, Acharn was the first place selected, and they began to work at a hill for a foundation. An old woman who had a few goats dwelt at the place, and she knew that when the castle should be built she would not be allowed to remain or to keep her goats there any longer. So she went to the Campbell of that day and said, "Cold is the place where you are building the castle; it will be exposed to every wind and storm." And he asked her, "Where would you build it?" "Where I should hear the thrush," she replied.

In those days people believed in superstitions, and they tried to ascertain where the thrush should be first heard. There was a field where McGregor was wont to keep his calves. It was enclosed with blackthorn and hawthorn, and



THE TAY AT KENMORE, BEN LAWERS IN THE DISTANCE.

there was a pass called the Pass of the Calves, through which they were put in and brought out. That was the first place in which they heard the thrush. The castle was built there, and it was called Caisteal Bhealaich (Pass Castle) by

the common people, and Taymouth by the gentry.\*

As the river quits the loch, it flows for a mile and a half through the Taymouth Castle grounds, with its avenues of stately limes planted with so much care by Sir Duncan Campbell of the Cowl, a bitter foe to the clan McGregor. Lord Archibald Campbell, in his interesting book already mentioned in connection with the Aray, gives the following translation of the old Gaelic "Song of Breadalbane," two of the verses running as follows :—

"Loch Tay of the salmon  
That come from the sea of rough waves,  
Which is belted spotted, small speckled,  
And supplied with rough, strong fins;  
Leaping to every false fly,  
Seizing flies on the tops of the waves;  
They are numerous in every pool,  
Spawning in the water bottom of the land.

"Where was there seen in Scotland  
A place that excelled Breadalbane of my love?  
Whiskey and all would be found there,  
Beer and brandy to drink.

\* From "The Records of Argyle," by Lord Archibald Campbell.

What else would you desire,  
 Unless a bottle of wine or of rum?  
 Generously would that be obtained,  
 With bread and cheese supplied on the table."

The other verses of this song do not concern fish or fishermen, so I omit them; but, whoever the poet may have been, every verse makes it clear he knew what he was writing about, and fully appreciated both the good things appertaining to the domains of his chieftain and the generous hospitality dispensed at the castle.

Over and over again have I been present when a discussion has arisen amongst a company of Sassenach sportsmen as to which of the big Scotch properties they would take if they had their choice. Well, some would have liked to dispossess the Duke of Fife, others His Grace of Sutherland, or oust Lord Lovat from Beaufort Castle, or the Duke of Roxburghe from Floors; but for one who would have chosen any of these there have ever been three who would have taken the lands of the Marquis of Breadalbane.



But this is a digression, and let me return to the river, which, as it leaves the castle grounds, is joined by the Lyon, flowing from the loch of the



MEGGERNIE CASTLE AND THE HORSE POOL.

same name on the borders of Argyll, some forty miles to the west of the confluence. To the Meggernie Castle estate belongs the first twelve

miles, from Loch Lyon to Meggernie or Balgie Bridge, and in this distance there are many fine pools and streams, all holding fish after the end of May, and from most of them have I had captives in the happy days spent at Meggernie with the late Mr. Herbert Wood prior to his purchasing the island of Raasay.

Three miles above the bridge and one above the castle are the Falls of Gallan, and from below them, down to the Bridge Pool, is the best of the Meggernie water, which in August and September will often yield a good many fish; hundreds could be netted, but the owner of Meggernie generously does not exercise his right. These Gallan Falls are a series of pots, one on the top of the other, and the fish have to work hard to ascend them. When they arrive at the foot of the falls, just as the water begins to subside after a spate, their difficulties are increased, and most of them pack up into these pots, there to wait for a fresh rainfall.



BALGIE BRIDGE POOL, THE LOWEST AND ON THE MEAGREND WAY.



THE BRIDGE AT BALGIE, ON THE MEAGREND WAY.



I remember once, when at Meggernie during an August drought, some of us were commandeered by our hostess to get a fish for the house; so after every device with the rod had been tried in vain, determined not to return empty-handed, we sent the keeper for his "clap net,"\* and out of the very first pot we searched with it we got four fish. As this was more than we wanted, some one suggested we should confine the other three in a small stream flowing from the top of the falls and joining the river below. Wire netting was sent for, and we made a fine dam at the top and bottom of the narrow channel, and, after fixing the wire barrier effectually across it, we turned the other three in. As it seemed absolutely secure, we thought we might as well increase the stock, and so make a preserve of salmon to be always ready for the table. Then once more to work we went with the

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\* See "The Dee of Kirkcudbrightshire" in this volume.

net, and in a short time over two dozen fish were safely imprisoned.

All went well for a week, during which the *chef* dished up salmon in all sorts of ways, when down came a great spate, and the next day our preserve was empty! Our host said it served us right, so we had to console ourselves with assurances from our hostess that she herself was far from taking that view of the disaster.

Below Balgie Bridge begins the Innerwick angling, which with the shootings has been rented for many years by Mr. J. F. Underwood, and it is to his son that I am indebted for the excellent photographs of this river. The Innerwick water, passing Roro Bridge, goes down for five miles, but the last mile and a half is only good for troutng. Before, however, this is reached there are eleven nice pools, viz., Balgie, Island, Minister's, Upper, Middle and Lower Wall, Meadow Run, the Tree, Island Run, Roro Bridge and the Barn, all of which except the last can be fished dry-shod. The







Fig. 1. The same as Fig. 1.





Barn is the best of the lot, but in high water wading stockings are wanted, and it has to be cast from the south side. Salmon run pretty quickly through this and the waters below, so consequently the take is never a heavy one, and from ten to fifteen in the season is about the usual thing.

Next comes the Chesthill reach of some six miles, mostly on both banks, followed on the north or left bank by Sir Donald Currie's Garth Castle water, two miles in length and holding eight good pools, of which the pick are the Castle, the Rocky and John Roy's, and here the best time is from the opening day to the end of April, during which period from ten to fifteen fish, averaging eighteen pounds, are usually got, the favourite flies being Jock Scot, Blue Doctor, Thunder and Lightning and Dusty Miller, medium sizes; while the Phantom (No. 6 size), the natural minnow and the prawn all kill, though higher up and later in the year lures other than the fly are of no use.

Below the Garth Castle water Sir Donald Currie permits the hotel at Fortingall to fish the remaining four and a half miles of his part of the Lyon, the charge for which is ten shillings a day for each rod, and up to the end of April this reach often shows good sport.

From the top of the Garth march the angling of the right bank belongs to Lord Breadalbane, and goes with the Duneaves shootings.

On all these fishings wading stockings are desirable, though not absolutely necessary. On the lower reaches a rod of eighteen feet will be none too long, but for Innerwick and Meggernie a sixteen-foot one will be ample, while for these reaches two flies only will suffice, viz., Jock Scot for dark and big water and the Meggernie for a clear low river; this latter lure was an invention of a keeper there and is dressed as follows:—

Tag: Silver twist.

Tail: Topping.

But: Black ostrich herl.

Body: Silver tinsel ribbed with flat silver twist.

Hackle: Black, put on at shoulder only, with fibres long enough to reach to the but.

Wing: Fibres of mallard, bustard, wood duck, and yellow, blue and red swan, jungle cock cheeks.

About a mile and a half before the junction with the Tay, Garth water ends on the north bank, and Sir Robert Menzies comes in at Keltney Burn and continues down the Lyon until it joins the Tay opposite Taymouth Castle deer park, with a good pool at the Junction, and from thence to the east march the Menzies property runs for about a further five miles.

Below the Junction comes the Pipers, opposite to Tirnie Island, better for holding fish as the season advances. The next is the Carrie, a long pool of nearly a quarter of a mile, and good at all times and seasons, while both banks are here owned by Sir Robert.

This is followed by Neil's Pool, better formerly than it is now, where the opposite bank is again Breadalbane property.

Then comes Bolfracks, best fished from a boat, and a good cast, especially at the beginning of the season.

Following come Balhomais and Farleyer, the former a short cast, the latter a good long one, and here again both banks become Sir Robert's.

Then follows Dunskiag, a big pool, which must be harled, and is succeeded by the Island, Tay Bridge and Weem Park, the last on the Menzies estate.

Prior to 1860 all this fine water used to be good fishing, while between the pools there are capital spawning grounds. In those days the average take of salmon for The Castle use, helped by an occasional dip of the net, was about one hundred and fifty, and once the Carrie gave an angler eight salmon before breakfast.









SIR ROBERT MENZIES, BART., OF CASTLE MENZIES



Since 1862 the fishing has fallen off, for in that year an alteration was made in the weekly close time, which enabled the netting stations between Perth Bridge and Stanley to catch nearly all the fish.

Most of these pools can be cast from the banks, and hereabouts the best flies are Blue Doctor, Jock Scot and Butcher, but when the river is large natural and artificial minnows both kill, though the prawn is of but little use.

When Castle Menzies is let, this stretch of water always goes with it. It ends just above Aberfeldy, while Lord Breadalbane continues on the opposite bank for about a mile further.

Angling has fallen off very much, and now but from ten to fifteen fish are got in the season, averaging eighteen pounds. It is, however, hoped that if the netting above Perth ceases, as there is a prospect of its doing, then the whole Tay will be as full of fish as the Aberdeenshire Dee.

In that event it would certainly rank, as it ought to, as the premier river of Scotland, for whereas the spring fish of the Dee do not average more than ten pounds, those of the Tay would be eighteen pounds; and if these big fellows were to be caught in the same numbers as the smaller ones of the Dee, then the Tay angling would become of extraordinary value.

As that good sportsman, Sir Robert Menzies so famed for his feats of endurance, and on whom advancing years appear to have little or no effect—is a warm advocate of the scheme, and as he has been a member of the Tay Board ever since its formation, the matter has every chance of going through, especially as he is strongly backed by the proprietors above Campsie Linn.

As the Breadalbane property ends, the Grandtully estate of Lady Douglas Stewart begins, and goes down for some six miles on this south side of the river. Opposite to it are the properties of Killiechassie, belonging to Mrs. Douglas; Cluny,

belonging, with the next angling of Edradynate, to Mr. Stewart Robertson ; Derculich, with its pretty house and many bath-rooms ; Clochfoldich, Findynate, Pitcastle, Inner Ballechin, Pitnacree and Ballechin - all these ten properties are opposite



THE TAY BELOW GRANDTULLY.

Grandtully and share the same pools, each side, as is the custom all down the Tay, taking three days a week.

As Grandtully ends on the south side, the Duke of Atholl comes in ; next is his Easthaugh

property, followed by his two others of Kinnaird and Logierait.

Crossing to the north side and returning up stream, as Ballechin ends there comes the Eastertyre reach, and then the Duke of Atholl follows on, and the glebe claiming a small slice, the Duke's lands continue to the junction of the Tummel: and now, quitting the Tay for a short time, a few pages will be devoted to this river and its tributary, the Garry.

“Fast runs the sunlit Tummel,  
 Strong from his wilds above,  
 Blue as the ‘body of heaven,’  
 Shot like the neck of a dove,  
 He is fresh from the moor of Rannoch,  
 He has drained Loch Erich dread,  
 And mirror’d on Carie’s water  
 Ben-y-Houlath’s stately head;  
 He has moused round the graves of the Struans,  
 Hid in the night of the wood,  
 He glides by the pleasant slope  
 Where our old Dunalastair stood,  
 Schehallion has heard him chafing  
 Down by his sunless steep,  
 And has watched the child of the mountains  
 Deep in his loch asleep.









Fig. 1. Waterfall, Canyon.



He's awake! and off by Bonskeid,  
He has leapt his falls with glee;  
He has married the swirling Garry,  
And they linger in Faskally."

Thus sang the late Mr. John Brown, the charming author of "Rab and His Friends."

The Tummel first takes its name when it flows from Loch Rannoch, which is a big loch of ten miles long, receiving the waters of a great extent of country lying around and to the west of the head of the loch. After a winding run of some ten miles it enters Loch Tummel, also a good-sized piece of water four miles in length, and flowing from it the river runs past a portion of the Faskally property on the right bank with the lands of Allean and Bonskeid on the left, to where the Garry joins in some two hundred yards below the Falls of Tummel. In certain states of water a few fish—very few—ascend these falls, for they are seen above them every season, though rarely caught in a legitimate way, and as those that are poached are naturally not reported, the idea

prevails that no fish make their way up. Few people angle for salmon above the falls, and, moreover, the fish that ascend them do not pass up till well on in the season. Still, some are caught each autumn by the rod, and in many cases are called "ferox" by the locals, who fear the interference of the proprietors of the salmon fishing rights if they were classed as salmon.

The question of laddering these falls has often been mooted, and apart from legal and other objections by the owners, whose consent would have to be obtained, there are several matters to be taken into consideration.\* At present, fish seldom attempt the ascent till the end of April, and then only when the river is so small that it is not in running order, and the fish that try the falls are those collected in the nearest pools. When the river is in running order, the rush of

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\* See Vol. II., "Obstructions."

water at the foot of the falls is so strong that salmon wait further back, or take the Garry instead. Thus a ladder that would allow fish to ascend in all states of the water would be an expensive matter, but nevertheless an undertaking well worth carrying out, for if fish were above the falls in April they would be pretty sure to give good angling, while the vast extent of breeding grounds that would be opened up could not fail in due course to largely increase the stock of fish.

In old days baskets were hung on each side of the falls to catch the fish as they fell back after making their leap to ascend. The Faskally basket was not nearly so successful as the Bonskeid one, which accounted for many fish, until removed in accordance with the 1868 Act, which rendered them illegal, and a good thing too!

Now and then a salmon jumps on to the top of the rock from which the Bonskeid basket formerly hung, just eight feet seven inches

above the water when it is in its best state for making the attempt. It was from a narrow,



A FISH ASCENDING THE FALLS OF TUMMEL.

slippery ledge at its foot that Mr. T. Ripley Ker took the annexed photograph.

The basket trick showed that May and June

were the most productive months, while fish were seldom got before the end of April or after July.

In this Fall Pool also, up till 1868, snatching was openly practised and looked upon as orthodox, and that good sportsman, the late Mr. Archibald Butter, of Faskally, would never own or acknowledge that the law had any right to interfere with a custom of such ancient date.

It has been alleged that if fish were given a free passage up the falls it would reduce the angling values of the waters below, but this is unlikely, as it is more to the interest of the rods to have the catches occupied by newly-run fish than by those which have been long in the river.

Of course, if what fish there were passed up and no others came forward to take their places, then undoubtedly the angling values would suffer, but this is in the highest degree improbable.

Below the falls, on the left bank, Bonskeid holds the rights down to the Garry junction, a

distance of some two hundred yards, which, short as it is, often yields a good many fish.

Faskally owns the side opposite, as well as both banks of the Tummel for several miles, and this portion as far as Cluny Bridge, half a mile above Pitlochry, is usually let as "the Faskally Water"—as fine and pretty a bit of angling as is to be found in Scotland, for the scenery is splendid, the casting, except from the Boat Pool, is all from the banks, and sufficiently difficult to make the angler pleased with himself when he has fished a pool well, while there is absolutely no wading required. More fish is the one thing wanted, and if they were forthcoming, it would be a very big rent that this beautiful piece of water would command. The extent is ample for two hard-working anglers, and three or four fish to each is now regarded as a very good day. In 1895 seven fish, weighing one hundred and thirteen pounds, were taken in a day, and in 1897 the same number was twice recorded. The best season for many years was that of 1891, when



just over one hundred fish were brought to bank. The next best was 1808, when more than seventy shared a like fate. Although there are a good many of twenty pounds, the average weight may be



THE FUMEL BELOW FASKALLY, FOCKSHEET IN THE FOREGROUND  
POUSA-BHARDON IN MID-DISTANCE

put at fourteen. There are also a few of twenty-five pounds, and very rarely one of thirty pounds two of thirty-three pounds, one from Faskally and the other from Bonskeid, representing the heaviest recorded weights. Grilse are not plentiful and scale

about five pounds, arriving towards the middle of June.

The higher casts on Faskally, all of which are also fished from Bonskeid, are the Pot, Long Cast, and Greenbank.

Then comes Junction Pool, liable to continual alterations by the Garry floods.

Next is the Boat Pool, followed on the right bank by The Cave, Pol-na-bhearon, and Craig-andhalor, a good one for big fish, for from it came one of the thirty-three-pounders already mentioned, which was got by Captain Gaskell while taking a cast or two to try the rod of a friend!

The next two, Bonnybeg and Flottich, fish best from the left bank, reached by crossing Cluny Bridge just below them.

From this bridge, Fishers' Hotel, at Pitlochry, holds the remainder of the Faskally water, but on part of it the properties of Fonab and Dunfallandy, on the right bank, have also fishing titles. Here there are both bank and boat

casts, and sport is generally pretty good, the natural minnow often doing better than the fly. There is about five miles of this water, divided into three rotating beats, the charge being 30s. a day, which includes a boat and the services of two men.

The remainder of the Tummel to its junction with the Tay belongs to the Duke of Atholl, who lets both banks with Easthaugh House, and its extent will keep several rods occupied, for the pools are large and deep, while the early-run fish stay here before the water is warm enough to tempt them into the rapid streams above. This part of the river is, however, owing to its gravelly banks, liable to great alterations in its channel year by year.

There are six good casts above Ballinling Bridge. Below this is the Junction and some pools on the Tay above it, which go with Easthaugh, and are always well worthy of the closest attention.

## THE GARRY

is a rapid, rocky-bedded stream flowing out of Loch Garry near Dalnaspidal. It is joined at Struan by the Erochdie, and at Blair Atholl is further increased by the waters of the Tilt. A few miles below this it enters the Pass of Killiecrankie, to finally fall into the Tummel near Faskally House.

The Garry cannot be called a good salmon angling river, as before the fish reach it they have to pass through the Tay and the Tummel, losing their freshness on the way, besides gaining knowledge of the dangerous nature of the many lures that have already been offered them. Then, when at last they reach the entrance of the Garry, they may find there is not enough water to take them over the broad and sloping gravel bank of the junction, or, perhaps, the temperature of the river may be unpleasantly low as compared with that of the Tummel. The thermometer sometimes shows a difference of five degrees between the two streams,

and while the daily temperature of the Tummel hardly varies, being regulated by the outflow from a chain of lochs, that of the Garry rises four or five degrees, especially in low water with the sun beating down on its gravel shallows. Such variations induce fish to change their quarters at different hours of the day, while making them disinclined to rise.

Salmon are got in the lower pools in March and April, and even in February. These early arrivals, weighing from fifteen to twenty pounds, appear to be really Tummel fish which have chosen the Garry instead of trying the falls in the former river. Such visitors lie in the still deep pools of the Pass, and towards the end of April are joined by the real run of Garry fish, averaging about eleven pounds, which is followed by a general move for the upper reaches. Grilse, although not numerous, are more in evidence than in the Tummel, through which they seem to run quickly, and, arriving about the middle of June, they average from three and

a half to four pounds. The fish can make their way up to Loch Garry as well as for some distance up the Tilt, but by the time they have done so they are hardly worth taking. A rod of sixteen feet will cover the water, while above the Pass wading stockings are useful.

North of Blair Atholl the angling is let to the shooting tenants of the Duke, who keeps in his own hands some of the water below Tilt Junction.

The remaining portions belong to Urrard and Faskally on the left bank, and Shierglass, Killiecrankie Cottage, and Bonskeid on the right one.

The angling of that part of the Pass which goes with the Cottage and with Faskally offers difficulties, accompanied with a spice of danger, for the angler has not only to avoid hooking the trees behind him while keeping his footing on steep, slippery rocks, but has also in some places to follow a fish where progress seems hardly possible.

Within living memory, and before the netting on the Tay and its estuary became so deadly, many more fish ascended the Garry and were taken by rods, nets, and leisters, and during that



THE GARRY AND THE BAGTAIL POOL, LOOKING DOWN FROM  
MCDONALD'S BRIDGE

period of plenty two rods took with the fly in one day no less than eleven fish from a couple of pools in the Pass, while now it would require a whole season's hard work to make up a like number

The chief pools below Blair Atholl are Shier-glass, Essen, Dormie, Auldclune, the Boat and Bridge Pools; and then in the Pass the best are the Soldier's Leap, Three Stones, Insh, Blackrock, and Pulpit, while from Garry Bridge to the junction fish are seldom got.

From Loch Tay to the Tummel junction is some sixteen miles, in which most of the pools are boated, although there are a few that can be cast from the bank, and several that can be commanded by using wading trousers. Most of the catches are fine, long, splendid-looking places, ranging from one hundred to nearly three hundred yards in length. Although none of them are of any account after the end of May, it is indeed sad to relate that the take of the whole of this sixteen miles of water, from the 15th of January to the end of May, is under a hundred fish, or about six fish per mile, spread over four and a half months!

Now to return to the Tay—to Kinnaird water on the right bank and the Tummel junction on the



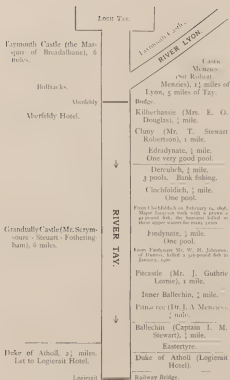
left one. Here, on the left bank, Easthaugh ends and the Duke of Atholl's Dunkeld reach commences and runs for seven miles to Dunkeld Bridge, with his two miles of Kinnaird opposite, succeeded for a mile and a half by the Dalguise property of Mr. Stewart, when the Duke again comes in and goes to Dunkeld Bridge. The whole of this portion of the river yields a certain amount of sport both in spring and autumn, and the take for the whole seven miles may be estimated at a total of one hundred fish.

The Birnam Hotel reach extends for a mile below Dunkeld on the right bank, and then begins the Murthly Castle water, belonging to Mr. Srymsoure-Steuart-Fotheringham, going on this side for four miles and on the opposite bank for one mile, when Mr. Murray's Stenton water comes in for a short distance, and is succeeded by Sir Alexander Muir Mackenzie's Delvine angling, running opposite to Murthly, as well as to the whole of the Upper and Lower Kercock water.

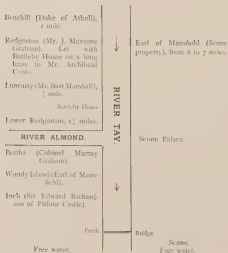
Then on both banks Meiklour joins on and continues for a mile on the left bank and two on the right. This is followed by the far-famed Stobhall reach of five miles, having opposite to it on the right bank the shorter but very good fishings of Ballathie, Taymount, Burnmouth, and Stanley.

As Stobhall ends on the left bank, the Earl of Mansfield's Scone Palace water begins, and goes down some five miles to a little below Perth Bridge, while opposite are Benchill, Redgorton (Battleby), Luncarty, Lower Redgorton, Bertha, Woody Isle, and Inch.

Here is the order in which the Tay anglings follow each other from Loch Tay to Perth Bridge : the mileages are approximate, but not very far wrong :—



	Logierath		Railway Bridge. Glebe.
Easthaugh (Duke of Atholl), 1 mile.			Easthaugh (Duke of Atholl).
Kinnaird (Duke of Atholl), 2 miles.			<b>TUMMEL JUNCTION.</b>
Dalguise (Mr. J. N. D. Stewart), 1½ miles.	↓		Easthaugh.
Three pools; one is bank fishing—average 20 spring fish and 15 autumn ones.			Dunkeld Water (Duke of Atholl), 5 miles.
Duke of Atholl, 3½ miles.			
Dunkeld			Bridge.
Binnam Hotel, 2 miles.			Fastwood (Duke of Atholl), 2 miles.
Murthly Castle (Mr. Stewart Fotheringham), 4 miles.			Murthly Castle, 1 mile.
Upper Kercock (J. Guthrie Lowie), under a mile.			Stenton (Mr. Graham Mur- ray), under a mile.
Lower Kercock (Mr. Mitchell Thomson), under a mile.			Delvine (Sir Alexander Muir Mackenzie), 3 miles.
Meiklour (Marquis of Lans- downe), 2 miles.			Meiklour, 1 mile.
			<b>RIVER ISLA.</b>
	Cargill		Railway Bridge.
Ballathie (Colonel E. R. S. Richardson), 1½ miles. 10 pools.			
Faymonn (Earl of Mans- field). Mr. C. A. Murray for the last thirty years.			Stobhall (Earl of Ancaster), about 6 miles. Let to Mr. P. D. Malloch, of Perth.
Burnmouth (Duke of Atholl), 11 pools.	↓		More than 30 pools.
Stanley (Mrs. Sandeman).			



To describe in minute detail all the renowned anglings lying between Dunkeld and Perth would be wearisome to my readers. A few cursory remarks will suffice to give a general idea of the whole of them.

The Murthly Castle water yields fine sport in

spring and autumn, and though the late fish are more plentiful, the splendid condition of the spring ones fully makes up for the difference in numbers. The banks of this fishing will long remain associated with the names of the late Mr. John Bright and the late Sir John Millais, both gentlemen having often fished here with great success.

The Meiklour water is another grand angling from which fair takes of spring fish are made, while those of the autumn are often extraordinary, for from ten to twenty are not uncommon, and as many as twenty-eight have been got in a day by one boat.

Ballathie, with its comfortable, pretty and striking-looking house on the banks of the river, is as pleasant a quarter as an angler can wish for. Just below the house is the famous Cradle Pool, the lower part offering a nice piece of Spey casting from the bank, and many are the spring and autumn salmon it has yielded.

In October, 1892, I had the good fortune to stay a week at Ballathie, and still retain a lively recollection of harling the top of the Cradle, with Gellatley, the fisherman, directing operations. It was the evening of the last day but one of the season; all day there had been an extra cold east wind, no sign of sun, and occasional showers. At four o'clock we were blank! Fancy that being the case on Ballathie on the 14th of October. In despair I put a big three-inch White Eagle, as used on the Dee, on each of the outside rods, and no sooner did we come to the lie of the fish than both reels were shrieking at once; then a minute later both rods were straight and both flies had gone!

Well, I had other three Eagles, so on went two more, and again both were taken at once, although this time one fish was brought to bank, the other departing with the fly. The loss having been made good, was followed by a single pull, when, a few seconds later, I was again cut. This reduced

us to the last of the Eagles, which, sad to relate, met with the same fate as its predecessors. Thus in this pool six fish carried off five flies; and in just that one part of the Cradle the chances are the line will be cut, for the fish lie in a deep, narrow channel, each side of which is overhung by rocks with knife-shaped edges. Although the luck had been against me, I was somewhat consoled by hearing from Gellatley of a former Cradle angler who had once been cut sixteen times in succession! also I had saved a blank day, and made a convert to the merits of the White Eagle when used on a cold, dark evening.

No one knows the Ballathie water better than Gellatley, though he is slightly prejudiced in favour of an ugly fly called the Smith, and if ever ten minutes lapsed without a pull, there invariably came the question, "Hae ye a Smarth?" He could also ply his rod as well as an oar; and on one midsummer day, when fishing for sea trout



with a small fly, he hooked and eventually landed a fifty-pound fish.

In harling it is the boatmen, not the anglers, who catch the fish : and those who know the water, and who will work hard to thoroughly cover it, will make the rods lay hold of three fish for every one that would be hooked if the boat were in less experienced hands.

On the last day of the season I witnessed my host, Colonel Cornwall Legh, have a desperate fight with a big one in the lowest pool of the Burnmouth water, when skill combined with "hands" eventually laid a fine fellow of forty-four pounds on the bank.

For the past few seasons the Duke of Bedford has had Ballathie,\* and in February, 1899, he and the Duchess had eleven fish of about eighteen pounds each in five days.

Taymount, belonging to the Earl of Mansfield,

\* Now rented by Lord Blythswood.

has been occupied for upwards of thirty years by Mr. C. A. Murray, one of the keenest and best of anglers, who has probably introduced more Tay fish to "the priest" than any one else on the river. This is a fine piece of water with upwards of twenty good casts, divided into upper and lower beats.

Mr. Murray has had as many as twenty fish in a day to his single rod, and all taken by casting, and thanks to his kindness I am enabled to give my readers his recollections of this wonderful sport:—

"I happened to go to the water rather late that morning; it was a coldish day, with a thin wind and a little rain. I had the lower beat, and during my long experience I never saw salmon take in the same way, and I believe had I begun at my usual time I should have killed fully thirty; as it was I got sixteen salmon and four grilse, their weights being three hundred and fifty-five pounds, or an average of seventeen and a half

pounds. I have had many other most excellent days during the long period I have fished this water, often getting twelve, fourteen and sixteen fish in a day, all by casting."

As this fine stretch of the Tay has already been immortalised by the Hon. and Rev. Robert Liddell, who could use both pen and rod with equal dexterity, and who was also well known on the Earn and the Tweed, I cannot do better than quote his description of the splendid present the river gave him on the 22nd of September, 1885, his seventy-eighth birthday! The take was made entirely by casting :—

But to be brief, throughout the river's length  
Stob Hall stands first, for grandeur and for strength.  
The eastern bank alone can really claim,  
From the old Scottish house, its famous name.  
'Tis Lady Willoughby's \*—the western sides  
Earl Mansfield owns—and these the Tay divides  
(The latter as Taymount is better known :  
And the Earl cedes it to his brother's son).

\* Now the Earl of Ancaster's.

By long agreement all this splendid reach  
Is held, upon alternate days, by each,  
So there's no rivalry to interfere  
With other's rights,—to each the coast is clear.  
The lower casts are those I know the best  
And by these names are locally expressed—  
Upper and Low Eol Brigg, the Washing Green,



CAMPSIE LINN.

And Finford Head—a fruity cast I ween—  
This merges fiercely into Finford stream,  
Whose surging waves with shoals of salmon teem.  
Then the Oak Tree, a lengthy pool within  
The close vicinity of Campsie Linn.  
Here the great river seems awhile to sleep  
In glassy stillness, treacherous and deep!

Then brimming over, makes a sudden vault  
Over a rocky dam of black basalt;  
And breaks in yeasty waves against the walls  
Of massive boulders, ranged beneath the falls;  
While the main pool's of such immense extension,  
'Tis like a tiny loch in its dimension,  
Where eddies, circling on its face, denote  
The rugged channel, over which they float.  
Now ere I speak of sport, let me recount  
To whom I owed it—Murray of Taysmount—  
Dear Charlie Murray! genial host and friend,  
Whose generous kindness nothing can transcend.  
Four times he gave me fishing, year by year,  
Just as my natal day was drawing near.  
First, on October two in eighty-three,  
Charles Murray took his share of work with me,—  
A lion's share it was, for twelve he got  
'Gainst ten, the number falling to my lot.  
His weight was also heavier by far,  
Quite sixty pounds and more—the chance of war!  
I'll say precisely, the united score  
Just reached three hundred pounds and twenty-four,  
That was a satisfactory beginning;  
But benten hollow by a later inning.  
The following year but little could be got,  
Water too small, with weather still and hot.  
But eighty-five's the year I well remember,  
Upon the twenty-second of September,  
A spate had brought great multitudes of fish,  
And all fell out according to our wish.

Day fresh and clear, with a delicious breeze,  
Waving salutes from all th' adjacent trees,  
Then came the greatest take I'd ever seen,  
A score! six salmon and of grilse fourteen!  
And when these fish were scaled, the aggregate  
Was pounds two hundred and thirteen in weight.  
Now, mind you, this was all hard, honest casting;  
The exercise for full nine hours lasting.  
Some casualties, too, occurred of course:  
Fish struggled off, or broke me, which was worse.  
Once I was cut against a sunken boulder,  
And a stout hook was snapped across the shoulder:  
But accidents like these enhance our fun:  
Success would cloy, if sportsmen *always* won!  
And salmon were so numerous and game,  
One was scarce off before another came.

Opposite is the lengthy stretch of the fish-famed Stobhall Water, which is rented, together with one beat on Benchill and one on Burnmouth, by Mr. P. D. Malloch, who sub-lets it in the spring to two rods, and in the autumn to eight. In 1899 these were Mr. J. W. Barry, the Duke of Bedford, Lord Blythswood, the Earl Cairns, Mr. Archibald Coats, Mr. Panmure Gordon, the Earl of Hardwicke, and the Earl of Warwick. This is undoubtedly

the finest angling stretch of the Tay, yielding fair sport in spring, with extraordinarily good takes on the removal of the nets. There are between thirty and forty fine casts, the whole of which were formerly rented by the late Mr. Barclay Field. Here he and his two well-known fishermen—Joseph Panton and John Haggart—made many great scores; to the latter belongs the honour of killing with a Phantom perhaps the heaviest fish ever landed by the rod in the United Kingdom, which weighed sixty-two pounds.\* Mr. Barclay Field also had the Ballathie shootings, and one day Panton was asked if he would come out and beat for the guns or go to the river; he chose the latter, and took thirty-three fish to his own rod! On returning from shooting, his master asked him if he had got as many fish as he wanted, when old Joe, being a man of few words, merely answered "Yes" and turned away, although anxiously waiting

\* See also "Nith" in this volume.

for the inquiry, "How many?" and chuckling to himself at the thought of what a sensation his reply would create. Mr. Field, however, forgot to put the question, an omission which to this day the hero of the big score has never quite condoned.

In 1899 Lord Blythwood, who has a long experience of the Tay, had the Islamouth beat of Stobhall, with one on Taymount as well, so that he had fishing every day in the week. In twenty-three days he got one hundred and thirty fish to his own rod, the largest of which was one of fifty-three pounds, hooked in the lower end of Sandyford Pool by a moderate-sized Black Dog. In the same period Lord Blythwood's guests had ninety-eight others, Mr. H. Praed getting a day of twenty-two fish, headed by one of forty-three pounds. The whole of these fish were caught by the fly and by casting; and on all the well stocked autumn reaches harling is now only resorted to on those pools which cannot be fished in any other way.



Lord Blythwood is strongly of opinion that the Tay angling has been slowly but surely deteriorating ever since the netting time was extended in 1862 from the 21st to the 26th of August. To the uninitiated a week more or less may not



SEEDERS AT WORK.

seem of much account: but in that one week there are often several thousands of fish netted, which if spared would give a splendid stock of spawners to the upper waters.

On the Tay, what is practically the last heavy

run of fish takes place with the Lammas floods, which generally come some time in the first half of August. The season of 1899 was remarkable by their absence, and they did not arrive until the end of the month, and after the nets came off, with the result that the river became really well stocked.

From 1828 to 1852 the Tay was netted up to the 15th of September! During that period the rental fell every year, from £14,500 in 1828 to under £8,000 in 1852. There can be no doubt that had this close time been continued until now, then the Tay would almost have ceased to be a salmon river. The owners of the nettings, seeing what would happen, then agreed of their own accord to return to the 26th of August, which, up to 1828, had been the beginning of the close time for four hundred years. Later on this was altered to the 21st of August, and then, in 1862, it was once more most unwisely extended to the 26th, at which date it has since remained.

The above facts speak for themselves as to the enormous power exercised by the close time, and there can be no doubt it would be better for the river if netting ceased on the 21st of August; and this is one of the matters which is likely to be considered by the recently formed Tay Syndicate.

On the 4th of October, 1883, Lord Ruthven took a very heavy fish from the Finford Pool of Stobhall, a little below Taymount—a cock fish fifty inches long and thirty in girth. His captor writes:—

"We had nothing heavy enough to weigh him with at the river side, so he was taken into Perth railway station, and weighed next day a trifle over fifty-four pounds, so he must have weighed considerably more when first taken out of the water. He was a very dull fish, and never showed after he was hooked. The fly was a No. 2 Jock Scot, and we landed him in about half an hour."

Colonel Harry Clarke Jervoise, on the 23rd of September, had another leviathan from this same

pool, which was fully fifty pounds. "I never called it a fifty-pounder," writes the Colonel, "though doubtless it was that and over when taken out of the water. Unfortunately I was unable to scale him until the following morning, twenty hours afterwards. He then weighed a little over forty-nine pounds. He was taken with a 2/o Jock Scot at the tail of Finford Head, and was killed in about twenty minutes, though I had to cross the river to prevent his going through the rough water and rocks between Finford Head and Finford Stream. He was a beautiful fish, fresh from the sea, although without sea lice, in perfect order. Length, forty-eight inches; girth, twenty-seven and a half inches; breadth of tail, thirteen inches."

From these experiences of Lord Ruthven and Colonel Clarke Jervoise it will be seen that it is just as well to attack the autumn fish of the Tay provided with a steel-yard that will weigh up to sixty pounds, for it is rather a

pity not to know the exact weight of such very heavy fish.

In my book of "Shooting and Salmon Fishing" there is given a method by which a steel-yard may be made to show the weight of any fish, and as the "dodge" does not seem to be well known to anglers, I mention it again. Suppose a fish is judged to be fifty pounds and the available steel-yard will only weigh up to forty pounds, then select a stone of over ten pounds, weigh it exactly, and tie a cord round it, the end of which pass through the ring at the top of the steel-yard and fasten it taut to the hook on which the fish is to be suspended for weighing. Then place the fish on the hook, and before its weight can tell on the indicator of the steel-yard it will have to raise the weight of the stone, and that added to what the indicator then marks will be the total weight of the fish. Thus a fifty-pounder having raised a stone of fifteen pounds will lower the indicator to thirty-five pounds.

I have never had the good fortune to be in a position to experiment with one of fifty pounds, but have often tested the loss of weight in fish of from twenty to twenty-five pounds, and "minnows" like these have always shown a decrease in twenty-four hours of nearly two pounds; therefore, if the loss is in proportion to the weight, then a fish weighing fifty pounds twenty-four hours after his capture would have scaled fifty-four pounds at the river side. From the foregoing it will be seen that a boat on Stobhall, whether in spring or in autumn, leaves but little to be desired.

As Taymouth ends Burnmouth commences—a short stretch of ten pools, under a mile in length, but all of it good, the lowest catch being specially so.

Below Burnmouth, and still opposite Stobhall, the Stanley water comes in, on which there are many fine casts; and it was from the Mill Stream here that in October, 1895, Lord Zetland got his fish of fifty-five pounds with a Claret Major—











length, fifty inches; girth, thirty inches—and through his kindness I am enabled to give an illustration of this fine fellow.

The Stanley Water also fished right well in the spring of this year. Mr. H. P. Holford had a beat on it for six weeks from the opening, and managed to average nearly a fish a day of seventeen pounds mean weight. As bad luck would have it, he happened to miss the best day, when old Joseph Panton took for him, on the 19th of February, six fish of 28, 18, 16, 13, 10, and 10 lbs.—a record day on Stanley at that time of year. Colonel Philpots had the other beat, and, I believe, did nearly as well.

Below Stanley and opposite the Scone Estate comes Benchill, where, high above and almost overhanging the river, is the pretty house of Summerhill, rented for several years past, with a beat on Stobhall and another on Benchill, by the Hon. Louis Greville, and, oddly enough, twice during his tenancy has the last day of his season

proved the best. On one of these occasions fourteen fish were landed by himself and a friend. On the other, he gave the day to Lord Cairns, who had sixteen fish, weighing two hundred and sixty-six pounds. Benchill, though not a very lengthy stretch, is, from start to finish, of the highest quality. Especially is it endowed with some fine bank casts, from which many heavy fish have been taken by wading.

Next is the Redgorton Upper Water, in some seasons second to none, its top pool, the Black Craig, just above the Stormontfield Breeding Ponds, offering a fine piece of bank casting from either side, and when they have both been covered, the middle of the stream can be cast from the boat. It is easy to put away three or four hours at this one pool, never without desirable occupants, and where, early in August, 1895, I had some good sport by the aid of the natural minnow.

A little above the Ferry, near Luncarty Station, Mr. Burt Marshall has about three hundred yards







Fig. 1. View of the river from the left bank.



Fig. 2. View of the river.





of the river, below which the Redgorton Lower Water continues down opposite Scone to Almond Mouth. Here also are some good casts, both from bank and boat. This Redgorton stretch is sometimes called the Battleby Water, as both upper and lower beats go with the house of that name.

As Stobhall ends there follows the still lengthier reach of the Scone Water, belonging to the Earl of Mansfield, who is himself a very keen, hard-working angler, in which respect, however, he but follows in the footsteps of his father, the late Viscount Stormont, one of the best men, not only with rifle, rod and gun, but in every sense of the term, that it has ever been my good fortune to know. Strong as a horse, active as a stag, hardy to a degree, in the terms of the old song: "a rum one to follow, a bad one to beat," Lord Stormont had the gift of winning the hearts of rich and poor alike, and the recollection of his good-natured, kindly ways and pleasant smile is little likely to fade from

the memories of any one who had the privilege of knowing him.

Opposite to this splendid stretch of river, of which there are about eight miles, run the anglings of Benchill, Upper and Lower Redgorton, Luncarty, Bertha, Woody Isle, and Inch. From the top of the Scone Water down to above the Woody Isle the Earl keeps the angling in his own hands, and many and heavy are the spring and autumn fish that have come out of it. From Woody Isle to below Perth he generously gives permission to all who ask it, and it was on this stretch, two years ago, that Captain A. G. Goodwin had the luck to take a fish of fifty-five and a half pounds with a prawn. He hooked it just below Woody Isle, a little before six o'clock in the evening of the 28th September. The fight that followed was of unusual excitement, for in some way the thin reel line got hitched and broke, but was luckily caught just as it was slipping through the top ring, and the fish

happening to be quiet at the moment, the line was speedily knotted together, though up to the end of the battle the passing to and fro of the knot through the rings was a source of continual anxiety. After fighting hard with great spirit for an hour and a quarter, in which time the fish struggled half a mile down stream ere it was thoroughly beaten, this splendid fellow met his fate. Captain Goodwin used one of Hardy's fourteen-feet cane-built, steel-centre rods, with a fine undressed line of the Manchester Cotton Company. The fish was fifty-five inches long with a thirty-inch girth, which agrees exactly with the measurements of Lord Zetland's fifty-five pounder.

For six miles below Perth anglers are not interfered with, and each season, after the nets come off, a good many captures are made from the bank and from boats. The heaviest fish ever taken in the Tay was got somewhere hereabouts by the nets of Messrs. Speedie, and weighed seventy-two pounds.

The best angling periods on the river are as follows:—

Loch Tay: from the 15th of January to the 15th of May. Very few fish enter Loch Tay after May.

Above the Tummel: from the 15th of January till end of May; April best. A few fish killed late in the season.

Between Tummel and Dunkeld: from the 15th of January to end of May; March and April best. A few fish killed late in the season.

From Dunkeld to Islamouth: good from the 15th of January to end of May; from the 15th of August to end of season very good. The autumn run does not pass above Dunkeld in any large numbers.

From Islamouth to Linn of Campsie—the cream of the Tay: good from opening till end of May, and in autumn from middle of July to end of season, June being but of little good.







HARLING, THE DESCHILL WATER



THE ADAMHEAD POOL OF DESCHILL





From Linn of Campsie to Benchill: good from opening to middle of May, and from the 1st of July to close of season, numbers of grilse being taken on Stanley and Benchill.

From Benchill to Perth: good from opening till end of April, and in autumn from the 1st of August to the close of the season.

The flies used at the opening of the season are of the largest, the sizes being reduced as the season advances. The favourites are Black Dog, Nicholson, Butcher, Jock Scot, Poynder, Major, Sir Richard, Popham, Smith, etc. In the autumn much smaller ones are used, and almost every standard pattern will kill.

With suitable water the fly is the best lure, but there are times when the prawn and the Phantom will do execution when the feathers have failed. Deadly, also, is the natural minnow in those pools where the flow of the current permits its use, for it is waste of time to fish this lure in a stream that "tears" at the bait and keeps it on the top

of the water; and equally so to try it in a current so sluggish that it will not sweep it round at the full length of a taut line.

I am indebted to Mr. Malloch for the following details of the recently formed Tay Salmon Fisheries Company, and I cannot do better than give them in his own words:—

“In 1862 the working of the nets was extended to the 26th of August, and about the same time a great increase in the number of hang nets took place. These introductions were the means of reducing the number of spawning fish by fully one-half, so, foreseeing the ultimate ruin of the fishings, I set to work to see if it was not possible to form a small company that the proprietors could put confidence in.

“After maturing my scheme, it was laid before the Earl of Ancaster and Mr. Archibald Coats; it pleased them, and they took a large share in it, and forming ourselves into a syndicate, we commenced to rent all the fishings we could get for

one year, with the option of continuing them for eighteen years. This was a most difficult matter to carry through with so many proprietors, factors, agents and tacksmen to deal with ; but, nevertheless, after one year we have almost accomplished our object, and, with one or two exceptions, we have now secured all the nets on the river for eighteen years at a rental of over £15,000, and have now formed ourselves into a company, with a capital of £70,000.

"The Earl of Mansfield has let his fishings for a five years' lease. If we had them, we could let as many fish pass as we liked ; our sole object was to increase the supply of fish. I have no hesitation in stating that if we got the Earl of Mansfield's fishings, we could more than double the supply of fish ; and already they are increasing. Last year we took off a large number of hang and sweep nets, which was the means of double the quantity of fish being left in the river. After the nets came off these went up to spawn, returned

as kelts, and are now coming up in increased numbers. Last month (May, 1900) we got over one thousand fish more than the corresponding month the previous year. Last year we made a good profit, and that of this year we are devoting to the improvement of the fishings. We are employing a number of men all the year shooting seals, of which there were over five hundred in the estuary. A large number of the salmon we caught were marked with seals; now we seldom get one. Most of the seals have been shot or frightened out to sea. We are also employing men to kill down the pike, and have increased the staff of river watchers; everything that we can do to improve the fishings will be done. The cause of the great falling off in all our rivers is the upper and the lower proprietors do not work together; if they would only combine and work for the good of the whole river, it would be to the advantage of all. The Aberdeenshire Dee has done this, and look how the rental has increased! The rod-fishings we rent

are Stobhall, part of Ballathie, Burnmouth, Stanley, Benchill and Bertha."

Mr. Malloch himself is one of the most ardent and skilful of the many good anglers on Tayside. Some seasons ago he had the opportunity of three successive days of bank-casting: the first, on the Cargill beat of Stobhall, yielded fifteen fish; the second, on Benchill, gave fourteen others, and the third twelve more. Strange to relate, much as Mr. Malloch has fished, he has never had the luck to land that fifty-pounder for which every Tayside angler so ardently longs. One of forty-five pounds on Stobhall is the heaviest that has fallen to his rod.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE TWEED.

THE second largest river of Scotland, with a drainage area of 1,925 square miles, and a course of nearly a hundred, rises some five miles to the north of Moffat, in the range of high hills dividing the county of Dumfries from those of Peebles and Selkirk. For the first twenty-five miles of its course it is purely a trouting stream, salmon not ascending much above Peebles; while, as those that do arrive in the upper waters are never in any great numbers, or of any account for the table, serious angling—that is, angling which it would be worth while to rent at a good round sum—can hardly be said to commence before Ashiestiel Bridge is reached, some twelve miles below Peebles. About four miles below that town, at Cardrona,

there are a couple of good catches—and lower down two others on the Elibank section, at the end of which Miss Mount Stuart Russell's Ashiestiel property begins, opposite to that of Laidlawstiel belonging to Lady Reay.



THE TWEED AT PEEBLES.

The best cast hereabouts is the Gulleets, just above Ashiestiel Bridge. Another pool—Gleddie's Wheel—is famous for the ducking got in it by Sir Walter Scott, Hogg, and some of their friends, by the breaking up of the boat whilst they were

salmon spearing. The Yair water of Mr. Alexander Pringle then follows down for some distance to Russell's Rock, half a mile below Yair Bridge; on this stretch there are some seventeen good autumn casts, of which Needpath and the Yair Boat Pool are the best. Opposite Yair are the Torwoodlee fishings of Mr. J. T. Pringle and those of Fairnalee, owned by Professor Pattison. Here the north side, both above and below Ashiestiel Bridge, is rented by the old and well known Edinburgh Angling Club, who have their headquarters on the banks of the Tweed in a charming cottage called "The Nest."

The anglings hereabouts are not of much good until the middle of October, when fish usually begin to arrive, and from then to the end of the season it is just a matter of luck whether the angler hooks a "nigger," who has rested for long in the lower waters, or gets hold of "something" that has come pretty straight from the sea.



Next, on both banks, Mr. C. H. Scott-Plummer's Sunderland Hall water commences, and goes to Tweed Bridge at Ettrick Foot where there is a fair cast, in addition to four others lying above it. The Ettrick itself is a



UDDINGSTON BRIDGE

tributary of considerable importance, with a course of fully thirty miles. Salmon enter it freely, and pass up to Yarrow Junction, two miles above Selkirk, the various anglings being strictly preserved.

The Sunderland Hall section is followed by the Gala or Boldside water of Mr. John Scott, which extends on both banks down to Gala Foot, and holds just a dozen fine casts, of which Boldside Wheel and Glen Mein are perhaps the best, while the top of this water may be regarded as the commencement of serious angling.

Then follows the Pavilion stretch, belonging to the Hon. Mrs. Henry, a daughter of the last Lord Somerville; it is three miles in length, on both banks, and reaches to a mile below Melrose. The angling (usually let with the house and shootings) comprises eighteen good pools, the three best perhaps being the Brig End, the Whorles, and Cowie's Hole.

Where Tweed majestically flows  
Twixt Abbotsford and fair Melrose,

as sang that angler bard, the late Hon. and Rev. Robert Liddell, who thus describes a day on the Pavilion water, when he was a frequent guest of

the late Colonels Learmouth and Broadwood, both keen anglers, the last-named gentleman making great scores, although minus his left arm, lost in action

So in the morn were out again  
The river's 'big,' but no more rain



THE OUSE AT MILDEN

The atmosphere both cool and fresh,  
And Richardson foretells 'some fesh,  
The upper water's still our mark,  
Where we left off when it was dark:  
But higher up along the shore's  
A cast they call the Nares or Nore.

Here we begin with might and main,  
But our first trial's all in vain ;  
For when there's so much water on  
The chances there are not begun.  
So next we go to Brig End stream,  
Where the side current curds like cream,  
The cast is changed, the fly the same —  
A 'Double Toppy' is its name ;  
Mixed body, tinsel, blue at shoulder,  
On largish hook, a certain holder ;  
The wing is from a turkey's tail,  
The middle dark, but both ends pale.  
Well, 'Brig End' was to be respected :  
The fish came just where we expected.  
She took it well beneath the surface  
Without a rise or showing her face.  
The grip was good, the hook held fast,  
And ere six minutes quite were past  
We had laid her upon the ground,  
A 'luggit' weighing eighteen pound.  
No more up there ; we change the fly,  
And next the Quarry stream we try.  
There with a second we give battle,  
A seventeen-pounder — such a rattle !  
The stream was strong — all boil and bubble,  
And so the salmon gave us trouble.  
Below John's house we got a third,  
About twelve pounds, and then we heard  
Along the road the dog-cart roll

To take us down to 'Cowie's Hole,'  
Distant about two miles or more.  
I'd never seen the cast before,  
And a prime cast it is, no doubt,  
As I in substance soon found out.  
We didn't leave that favourite spot  
Till two more salmon we had got,  
Both sixteen pound, and each a clipper,  
The first a haggit, next a kipper."

These lines were penned about 1885, and since then severe disease and pollutions have reduced the numbers of the Tweed salmon, though from eighty to a hundred and fifty fish should yet be taken off this beautiful stretch of water, from which, in Mr. Liddell's time, he records that a hundred were secured in a week.

Next is the Drygrange water of Mr. T. S. Roberts, usually let each season, and holding five nice pools. This is followed by the old Melrose water, owned on the south side by Sir William Ramsay Fairfax, of Ravenswood, which for the

last five years shows an average of forty-five fish each season.

The north bank belongs to Miss Meikleham, of Gladswood, down to "Cromweil," where Colonel Haig's celebrated Bemersyde water begins and continues down on this north bank for some distance, in which there are five good casts. It is essentially a high water angling. The top pool of Cromweil is rather dead water, but good late in the season.

The Gateheugh is a rapid shallow flowing over a rocky bed, in which there are a number of holes, each containing fish in autumn: and though remaining in order barely two days, when there are fish and the size is right, it is as sporting a cast as any on Tweed. From this pool Lord Romney took a thirty-seven-pound fish in November, 1899.

The Washing House stream is all too short, but is good when the water is getting on the low side.

The Hally Wheel Throat is a rare holding place - "never 'out of a tenant," and a sure cast in high water.

The Woodside is a pleasant cast in high water, as it can be commanded without the boat; but it holds few fish, and a beginner on it will be apt to hook more trees than anything else. This Bemersyde water has been rented for some years past by Mr. Walter Farquhar.

Below this and still on the north bank is the Dryburgh water of Sir William Scott, of Ancrum, let to the Dowager Lady Orr Ewing. Here there are seventeen pretty casts, and whenever there are plenty of fish in the Tweed, this section always claims its full share.

Below comes Lord Polwarth's Merton reach of twenty-two pools, the upper part being sometimes let, while the lower one is always in the hands of the proprietor. The first nine pools have the right on both banks; then on the south side, for the

next six pools, is the Maxton water of Sir William Fairfax, while the remaining seven are again Lord Polwarth's on both sides. Here the Cauld Pool, the Webbs, Crago'er and Still Foot are all noted casts, both in spring and autumn.

John Younger, the well-known Tweedside shoemaker, politician and angler, who was born in 1785, states in his book of "River Angling" that in 1816, one John Haliburton, a farmer friend, rented the Merton angling for fifteen pounds a year "with a cow's grass"!

The Rutherford water of Sir Edmund Antrobus follows and has eight pools, of which the Clippers is the lowest, while of Corse Heugh, the top one, Mr. Liddell sings:—

"Three mighty fish I lost that afternoon  
In the 'Corse Heugh' (I can't ensure the spelling),  
It's the upper cast, a mile above  
The fisherman John Aitken's cosy dwelling."

This section is sometimes let with Rutherford Lodge, only a few minutes distant from the



railway station of the same name. Like all the other anglings of the Tweed, it is not nearly so good as it was. There are two and a half miles of both banks, which during the last four seasons have yielded as follows :—

1896	..	105 salmon	13 grilse
1897	..	55 ..	13 ..
1898	..	52 ..	2 ..
1899	..	26 ..	42 ..

We now come to the famed Makerston reach, belonging to Mr. Hugh Scott, with its fourteen fine catches distributed over a mile and three-quarters of both banks, which are usually let, Lord Wimborne being the present tenant.

"Hirple Nellie" (excusably turned by an English sporting paper into "Help our Nellie"), Red Stane, Side Strake, Doors, Nether Heads, Willie's Owerfa' and Kill Mouth are all extra good; and once more to quote the rhyming Mr. Liddell :—

"These last five cataracts descend  
Through walls of rock from end to end;

They're known conjointly as 'The 'Trows'  
(Pronounced as if you were saying 'vows'),  
But meaning 'Troughs'—you'd ne'er attain  
The reason why, so I'll explain.  
Lang syne a prehistoric man  
Devised a raft of novel plan;  
He took two troughs for feeding cattle,  
Joined them with nails, or rope or wattle,  
And bevelled them, one end to be  
In shape just like our letter V,  
Then, if the stream were small and low  
(Else it were suicide to go),  
And poachers meant for salmon slaughter,  
Either to "sun" or "burn" the water:  
The leisterer stood with legs a-straddle  
Across this queerish sort of saddle,  
And when a luckless fish was seen  
He speared it through the space between."

Here Mr. Liddell once had a day of twenty fish, averaging eighteen pounds. In 1873, the late Mr. Malcolm, of Poltalloch, got seventy-three in a week. Nowadays, that would be a fair take for the whole season, for in 1898 the catch was but fifty fish, followed in 1899 by a total of seventy. George Wright, the well-known fisherman at Makerston, and who has been there nearly

forty-five years, attributes the falling off entirely to disease, and doubtless he is right to a great extent, while probably its greater virulence in the Tweed, as compared with its destructiveness in other rivers, is due entirely to the extra horrid and poisonous nature of the pollutions poured in from the manufactories on the banks.

Next comes the far-famed Floors Water, belonging to the Duke of Roxburghe, with its numerous pools spread over more than four miles of both banks. From the top one of The Slates to the lowest of Maxwheel—from which the late Duke once took in a day six salmon and twenty grilse—one cast is nearly as good as another, and while there is always ample room for three rods, in suitable water and windy weather there is plenty of space for four. It was on this water that Mr. Arthur Pryor, in November, 1886, took with a Wilkinson the heaviest fish ever killed by the rod on Tweedside. Unluckily it was not weighed on the bank, but was carted up to Floors Castle

along with fourteen other victims of Mr. Pryor's Forrest rod of eighteen and a half feet. It was then weighed in the presence of the Duke and the Duchess, Lord Hardwicke, Lord Kensington and Lord Lovat, and declared to be just over sixty pounds. The next morning at ten o'clock the shepherd, bringing in mutton, reweighed it and made it but fifty-seven and a half pounds.\* There can, however, be no doubt it was sixty pounds when first caught and first weighed.

In the mile and three-quarters of the Floors upper beat there are nine good pools, the best being Blackstone, Shot, Slap and New Stream. In the mile of the lower water there are seven others, of which the Coach Wynd, Garden Wall and Putt are the most noted. Below this comes the Ednam House section of a mile and a half, and each of these three anglings has the right on

\* For loss of weight, see "Tay" in this volume.







THE HOTEL





both banks. From where the Floors estate ends on both banks, it still continues down on the south one for upwards of four miles to Carham Burn, the march between England and Scotland. Part of this is the well-known Sprouston water, with its thirty-five pools, of which Sprouston Dub has the reputation of being the finest cast on the Tweed; but like the other famous Dub of Birgham, a strong breeze on it is necessary.

Nearly opposite Kelso—famous for Forrest and his rods—and a little above the end of the Castle water, the Teviot, after a course of sixty miles, joins the Tweed on the right bank, salmon ascending it in considerable numbers, many of them spring fish, for which March and April are the best months, the Duke owning the chief four miles of the river from Ormiston March to Maxwellheugh Mill.

The north bank of the Tweed for three miles is then the property of Sir Richard Waldie

Griffith, of Hendersyde Park, and goes down to the Eden junction. In this distance there are twenty-one pools and streams, the best being Mill Stream, Butterwash, Bushes, Scurry, the Dub, Slap, Little Davie, Mill End, Cottage Stream, Faulds and Edenfoot, all fished from a boat, the best time in spring being from the middle of February to end of April, and then in the autumn from the 15th of September to end of November, during which time about one hundred and eighty salmon and grilse are got each season, the former averaging eighteen pounds and the latter seven and a half pounds. The owner always keeps it in his own hands, and usually fishes it with two rods, though at times it could easily take a third.

The record on this water is held by Major the Hon. E. Bourke, who took from Sprouston Dub, on the 7th of October, 1895, seventeen salmon and grilse, weighing one hundred and sixty-nine and a half pounds. Numerous, however, are the







HENDERSON PARK



FISH SEAL ON THE HENDERSON WATER



good days recorded in Sir Richard's Fish Book, and by his kindness I am enabled to give a few of them.

In 1873, on the 13th of November, the late Sir George Waldie Griffith had thirteen fish, of two hundred and forty-eight pounds; and on the following day Mr. T. Taylor had a like number, totaling two hundred and sixty-three pounds. On the 9th of November, 1883, Sir Richard had fifteen, of one hundred and ninety-four pounds, all these three days being on Sprouston Dub.

On the lower water, in 1886, on the 13th of November, Mr. T. Taylor had a day of ten fish. On the 19th, Mr. Turner Farley, of Cairnton fame,\* had nine fish, making one hundred and eighty-two pounds.

In 1887, on the 12th of November, Sir Richard had eleven fish, and on the 25th other ten. On

\* See "Dec." Vol. II.

the 26th of October Captain Bridges had fourteen, averaging over sixteen pounds.

In 1889, on the 22nd of November, Mr. T. Taylor had fourteen, averaging over eighteen pounds.

In 1891 Sir Richard had thirteen fish, totaling the same heavy weight; and in 1899, on the 21st of October, he had twelve, the latter score showing that there are still a few fish left in the Tweed.

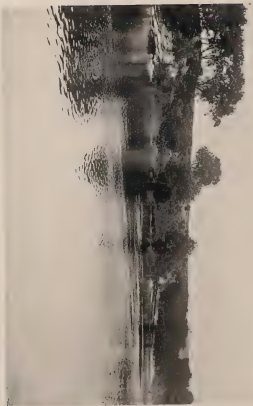
As the Hendersyde property ends on the north bank, the Earl of Home comes in with the celebrated Birgham Dub at the top of his angling. On the south or English side of the river are the Upper and Lower Carham waters, let to the Earl of Home on a lease which expires in 1902, so that the Earl has command from both banks of twenty-eight splendid pools, their nearness to the sea ensuring a continuous supply of fresh fish both in spring and autumn.







NATURE — 10





In April of this year of 1900 Lord Dunglass had ten fish during a week, five of which were got on the same day.

The big scores of the past that were made from Birgham Dub are associated with the recollections of many good fishermen, before whose names one has, alas! to write "the late," notably, Mr. Alfred Dennison, Lord Alexander Paget and Mr. Malcolm, of Poltalloch, whose deeds are duly sung by Mr. Liddell in his "*Lay of the Last Angler*;" while he himself, in 1887, took upwards of two hundred fish from this one cast, when days of eight to thirteen fish were quite common events.

The Wark water follows that of Carham, usually let, and also the property of the Earl of Home; then Mr. G. T. Marjoribanks comes in with the Lees or Lady Kirk water of eight good pools.

This is followed on the English side by Mr. Collingwood's Cornhill stretch, on which there are nine casts, all pretty good.

On the Scotch bank is the Earl of Haddington's Lennel water, commencing at Coldstream and going seawards for about a mile.

Below this comes the Paxton water of Colonel D. Milne-Home and let to Mr. Samuel Storey, which brings us to the tideway, where the angling is not of much account.

About a mile below Paxton House on the left bank the White Adder, noted for its trout, falls into the Tweed.

From the foregoing details it will be seen that the cream of the Tweed angling commences a little above Melrose and comes down to Coldstream—thirty miles of splendid water, the angling of which, if spring fish were only as plentiful as autumn ones, would bring in a far larger sum than is now obtained from the letting of the nets. Therefore, I can see no reason why the proprietors of the Tweed should not form a "combine" and follow the example of the Tay Syndicate.

The Tweed opens for the rod on the 1st of February, closing on the 30th of November—the longest open time of any river in Scotland. Netting begins on the 15th of February and continues till the 15th of September, and if that date were altered to the 1st of the month, the Tweed would soon be herself again.

The best angling months are February and the two following ones, and then from the 15th of September to the end of the season. An eighteen-foot rod is quite necessary, and knee boots for stepping in and out of the boats are required. As a gaff can only be used during the netting season, the landing net is nearly universally employed; likewise minnows, worms and prawns can only be used during the netting period, a restriction which many anglers complain of as being unnecessary and vexatious.

Flies range in size from 6/0 to 9, these latter, which are of trout size, being tied on double hooks.

The favourites are Jock Scot, Wilkinson, Greenwell, Silver Grey, Durham Ranger, Blue and Silver Doctor, Dandy, Butcher, Sir Richard, Childers, White and Dun Wing, Topsy and Stevenson, though there are any quantity of other patterns that have been used successfully.

A lengthy, big river like the Tweed is sure to bring some extra good fishermen to the front, and it cannot be dismissed without mentioning such names as Moody at Bemersyde, John Purdie and John Richardson at the Pavilion, with George Wright, Hendrie, and Mark Johnson at Makerston, Sandie Purdie at Merton, Rob Kerse at Hendersyde, John Aitken at Rutherford, with Willie Scott and Robson at Birgham. These are (or were) all men admitted to be at the top of the tree in the handling of a rod or the management of a Tweed boat—fine hardy fellows and right pleasant companions, who were always ready to do their utmost to show sport, and as keen at it as if they themselves had the rod.











The falling off in the number of salmon is to be accounted for by hard netting by fixed engines round the coasts of the mouth, by hard poaching during the close time, by horrible pollutions, rendering disease more deadly than on other rivers, and by the improved methods of draining.

This latter evil is one, however, that admits of no remedy; the other three may be and should be easily lessened, and until that is done there can be no hope of once more seeing this splendid river what it was in the beginning of the century.

First, the close time should be altered, and end on the 1st instead of on the 15th of September. Then, if *one* gunboat cannot protect the fish from the poachers, let the Government employ two or three, or even four, until the illegality had been suppressed.

As to the pollutions, the pollutors lie at the mercy of the proprietors, for every case of the sort is on all fours with the action brought by Lady Seafield and other Spey proprietors against the

Speyside distillers; and with the decision given in this action staring them in the face, there are but few manufacturers who would care to confront the certain risk of defeat and the payment of heavy costs.\*

From 1879 to 1892 there were 95,296 salmon, grilse and sea trout killed by disease and removed from the Tweed, which is much in excess of any other Scotch river, even allowing for the larger size of this one.

From 1808 to 1846—thirty-nine years—the average take of the nets was 140,000 salmon, grilse and sea trout.

From 1847 to 1885—another period of thirty-nine years—the average was 64,000, and nothing can indicate more plainly than these figures how much the river has deteriorated.

The most productive year of which any record exists was 1816, when 54,041 salmon, 120,594 grilse,

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\* See "River Spey" in Vol. II.

and 62,074 sea trout were captured, or 236,709 fish. But then the Tweed and its tributaries can boast of no less than 320 miles of water frequented by salmon, grilse and sea trout!

The proprietors of this river—and, indeed, of all the southern streams of Scotland—would warmly welcome a close time for trout, a matter so often talked of and so often nearly accomplished, but which has not at present become a fact.

In coming to the conclusion of my last volume, I cannot help regretting that I have had so little space to give to this river, on which it would have been easy to write a whole book, as it fully deserves.

## CHAPTER XV.

## RIVERS CAPABLE OF IMPROVEMENT.

THE heading of this chapter may perhaps be thought somewhat misleading, for from the angler's point of view there are no rivers that are not susceptible of betterment; some, however, have already been so much improved, that unless favourable alterations are made in the laws, there is little left to be done for them. In my humble opinion in this happy position are such rivers as the Brora, the Aberdeenshire Dee, the Helmsdale, the Lochy, the Shin and the Thurso, together with a few of the smaller ones; these are rivers which can hardly be improved except Government interferes on behalf of the entire salmon tribe, as would be the case if the weekly close time were lengthened, or if some laws were made which



should suppress scringing or mitigate the present destructiveness of the bag and stake nets.

The object, then, of this chapter is to try and show how there are yet rivers which are capable of great improvement without waiting for any alteration of the existing bye-laws. Goodness knows, those laws want revision badly enough, and every river proprietor is always hoping for a better state of affairs, yet it is of no use for them to sit still in the meantime; it is far wiser to make the best of the laws that are in force, while trying to render them as little harmful as possible.

Likewise this chapter is penned entirely in the firm conviction and on the basis that good angling is far more valuable than good netting; therefore, it now only remains for me to hope that none of my readers who are river owners will think me a "cheeky chap" for saying what I would try to do for the benefit of my own property, if I were in the delightful position of owning portions of some of the rivers I am about to discuss.

Let me commence by quoting the late Lord Abinger's letter, addressed in 1883 to the Scotch Fishery Board:—

"It would be a great improvement in many rivers, where there are conflicting interests, if the proprietors were to form a common society, with proportionate interests, and fish the rivers as a common property."

It is impossible to gainsay the wisdom of this advice. Naturally, where there were a great many owners, such an arrangement would be more difficult to carry out, while a few special cases exist in which it would be absolutely hopeless to try to bring all the proprietors to one mind. But there are many short rivers with only three or four proprietors, who could easily unite for their own benefit, and so make their streams yield them far larger returns than they do at present. In this category are such rivers as the Awe, with only four owners; the Forss, with two or three; the Halladale, Inver, Kirkaig, Laxford, Naver, the

whole of the last-named five owned by the Duke of Sutherland; the Shin and the Luce and the Big Gruinard, with two proprietors; and the Ness, with but five or six.

Now let us suppose that the joint owners of any one of these rivers rented all the bag nets working all the coast on either side of its mouth, and having got them into their hands ceased to work them, with the view of giving a splendid stock of fish to the river. Every pool and stream would then be full of them, and under such circumstances what would the angling rents amount to if let, according to the length of the river, and up to a certain point, mutually agreed on by the owners? Then above that point the syndicate should set to work with the nets and send the fish to market. They perhaps would not fetch quite such a high price as sea-caught fish, depending on how far from the salt water they were taken; but up to four miles I do not think the price would be affected, or that

either fishmonger or consumer could tell they were not sea-caught fish. In netting at the top of the angling as suggested, it would probably be found expedient to allow an extra twenty-four hours close time, so as to ensure a continually increasing stock for the first few years of this way of managing.

This method was tried with the greatest success by a Swedish proprietor on a river that was entirely his own, together with the foreshores; he removed all nets from both, and arranged to net four miles up the stream, while fishing with rod and fly only in the stretch between the mouth and the nets. This experiment resulted in extraordinary captures being made by the rod, while the returns from the nets and the prices received for the fish were much the same as when the foreshore was worked by bag nets and the mouth of the river by net and coble.

I think I am correct in stating that the owner had a record day of over sixty fish to his own rod, averaging seven pounds, and I know that in the

worst month of the season two rods are sure to take from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and fifty fish.

This angling was limited entirely to the fly, though it was only the small fish that would rise to that lure, for plenty of heavy ones were got in the nets above, even up to forty pounds.

"My brethren, as an example of my meaning," as the "meenister" says, let me take the case of the Awe, and narrate how I would try to persuade the other owners to join me in working it if I were one of the fortunate proprietors. They are, Mrs. Campbell, of Inverawe, the Duke of Argyll, the Marquis of Breadalbane, the trustees of the Lochnell Estate, and Mr. Muir, of Innistrynich, Mrs. Campbell and the two peers owning the greater portion. The Lochnell estate owns the principal netting pools, while the present rents are approximately as follows (they are not very far out, though they have only been estimated by listening to the talk of the natives: any way,

I believe they are rather over than under the mark) :—

The river netting lets for about .	£300
The Duke of Argyll's water, let to the Taynult Hotel . . .	100
The Duke's upper water on the left bank . . . .	60
Lord Breadalbane's stretch on the right bank, let to Colonel Murray of Polmaise . . .	150
Mrs. Campbell's Inverawe and Brander water . . . .	120
Mr. Muir's Innistrynich beat .	75
	--
	£805

Now let us suppose the proprietors agree to pool their proportionate interests, and having rented the nettings, resolve to remove the nets from the river mouth and transfer them to the top pool of the Awe at the Brander Pass, a little more than three miles from the sea.

At present the tacksman at the mouth seldom puts on his nets until about the 10th of March—a certain proof that there are no fish running prior to that date. Therefore, from the 15th of March the angling might be let; and as a further proof that this could fairly be done, Charlie Macdonnell,\* the Inverawe keeper, assures me that forty or fifty years ago, before the bag nets were so numerous, plenty of fish were caught in the Awe during March, April and May. Moreover, I have recently fished it in April and May, when I found what few fish there were the keenest and most certain risers I had ever come across, and if there had been plenty (as there would be with the nets removed), I could have made a big score. During the first ten days of May I saw but nine fish, which all rose to the first fly, three coming short and six hooking.

\* See "The Awe," Vol. II.

There are twenty-four good pools in the whole water (excluding the top pool, where the net would be worked), and a good few odd corners, now—owing to the scarcity of fish—usually passed by in contempt, but all of which would be worth a trial if there were lots of them. The pools are not short, small casts that can be fished in five minutes, but good big ones, taking from fifteen to forty-five minutes to cover properly. Therefore the river might be divided into six beats, rotating every day, each beat having both banks, and provided with a boat or wire bridge for crossing.

The question now is, what would the angling be worth under these supposed circumstances? In forming an estimate, I take as a guide the sums that I know are paid for other anglings, which do not yield either the sport in the weight or the number of fish that I believe the Awe would do under this new method of fishing it. Likewise I have fixed these following suppositious rents by what I should be willing to pay myself, which,



at any rate, keeps the estimate at its lowest point, though I have no doubt that three years after this new method had been employed larger, nay, even double, rents could be asked and would be cheerfully paid. My idea is that six rods could be easily found who would be willing to take the six beats on the following terms:—

From the 15th of March to the 30th	
of April, £40 a rod . . .	£240
For May, £40 a rod . . .	240
For June, £50 a rod . . .	300
For July, £60 a rod . . .	360
For August, £60 a rod . . .	360
For September, £50 a rod . . .	300
To the 15th of October, £25 a rod .	150

£1.950

Add to this the clear profit made on

netting the top pool, say . . .	500
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£2.450

I arrive at a profit of £500 as a reasonable estimate for the netting on the following data: these nets ought to take two thousand fish, averaging ten pounds apiece, which would sell for a mean price of 1s. 3d. a pound, thus bringing in £1,250. Deducting from this the wages of eight men at 21s. a week for five months, and allowing £80 for sundries, and £100 for the wages of two keepers all the year round, and a further £300 for the rent of the nets, and another £100 for wear and tear, etc., and there remains a clear profit of £500 a year.

Here, then, we have paid the Lochnell Trustees £300 for their netting, which leaves a balance of £505; but in lieu of that, under this system of working there would be £2,450 to be dealt with, or an excess on any previous profit of no less than £1,945 for division amongst the five proprietors of the Awe, according to their proportionate rights as agreed amongst themselves; and in addition

there are possibilities in the future of largely increasing this sum.

According to Watson Lyall's Guide, Lord Breadalbane receives £75\* from Colonel Murray for his angling on the right bank, while the Colonel pays the Duke of Argyll another £60 for the water on the left bank opposite to that of Lord Breadalbane. Now, the gallant Colonel only visits the Awe for six weeks or so, from about the 20th of June to the 5th of August (for the "twelfth" claims him at Polmaise), during which time his sport averages about a fish a day. The remainder of the angling season he kindly gives to his friends, with no niggard hand, as I have the good fortune to know; but would it not be better for him to have two beats for one month, or one beat for two months, and pay a few pounds more rent to kill three or four fish a day?

\* In my estimate taken at £150.

It is also possible that this method of working the river would let many more fish into Loch Awe and the Orchy; but what matter if it did benefit these waters to some extent?

With regard to the Orchy, it belongs to Lord Breadalbane; and as to the loch, the River Awe proprietors having had either splendid sport for themselves, or largely increased rents, could afford to be generous.

A great deal would depend on how the top pool lent itself to netting operations, but I have often studied it with this idea, and came to the conclusion that just as many fish could be netted there as at the mouth, always, of course, deducting those that fall victims to the bunches of feathers offered them on their way up stream.

For a fuller description of the splendid Awe I must refer my readers to Volume II.

I think that all the other rivers I have named, especially those belonging to the Duke of Sutherland, could be fished by the rod and netted higher

up, greatly to the increase of the rent-rolls of the estates to which they belong.

Now, I shall be greatly obliged if any sceptical readers will kindly take the trouble to write and tell me where they think my figures are very wide of the mark.

It may be asked how I arrive at the netting of the two thousand fish in the Brander Pool.

Well, I know that very many more are netted each season at the mouth of the river, and can see no reason why they should not be netted higher up.

It may also be questioned as to whether anglers would be found to pay the rents I have named.

Certainly, I say, for they are very moderate ones, and I base my assertion on the assumption that in each month each angler would get his fifteen to thirty fish, and perhaps more; while from the middle of June to the end of August each rod should kill double that quantity.

Now, who would not gladly pay the sums named for that sport, with a chance of better

things, and with the certainty thrown in of hooking some very heavy fish?

As matters are at present, if any one can kill salmon at £5 apiece he must think himself lucky, for double that is nearer the mark, aye, and even treble! If the takes were on the scale indicated, it would mean the killing of some eight hundred fish by rod and line, which would be nothing extraordinary under the circumstances, for the nets at the mouth get from three to five thousand fish a season, the whole of which would pass under the flies of the anglers before they met any net.

As the Awe is now worked, hardly any fish can enter the river, except during the weekly close time, which is strictly observed.

The netting pool of the Awe is some three hundred yards above the mouth. On the left bank, to which the net is hauled, the pool has a fine, gradually-shelving, shingly shore. On the right bank the water runs deep, and the net is

brought round within a foot of it, while every obstruction to its smooth working has been carefully removed from the bed of the river, which is here about thirty or forty yards wide. The moment one net is drawn out at the tail of the pool, a fresh one is shot from another boat starting again from the head of it, and this ceaseless netting is carried on night and day when fish are running. Therefore, small wonder that very few fish enter the poor Awe.

I would dearly like to "chance it" and try this experiment for myself. If I could lease the Awe netting and the whole of the river angling for £1,200 a year, I should be bitterly disappointed if I could not get some fine sport for myself for nothing, and at the same time clear a profit of £1,000 a year! That the proprietors could do this I am confident, though whether they will be able to agree to do so is quite a different matter.

There is another way by which the angling of most of the rivers flowing from lochs could be

bettered. I do not think it has ever been sufficiently realised what benefits are to be gained by the storage of loch waters with a view to being able to create an artificial spate in periods of drought. The ability to do this would be especially useful on many of the small streams of the west coast, where a long spell of dry weather is the great opportunity and harvest of the scringers. In such times salmon, grilse and sea trout gather together in daily increasing numbers at the mouths of the streams they wish to ascend, and there they will wait patiently for the rain to come, unless swept up by the nets of the poacher. Unfortunately, the fish make their presence only too visible by incessant splashing and swimming to and fro near the surface.

Obviously, it would be of no use to make a spate unless there were fish lying at the mouth of the river; but when they can be seen hanging about the embouchure, then for certain the creation of a flood will take them up stream. No better or more forcible exemplification of this can be



adduced than that of the Grimersta River, falling into the north-west coast of the Island of Lewis. Most anglers have heard of the wonderful scores made there, but many are in ignorance of how such results were obtained, and until a few years ago I was one of those who had heard of the great takes, and, envying the lucky anglers, thought no more of the matter. Then it was my good luck to meet Mr. Hansard, one of the fortunate Grimersta trio, and from him I heard the whole story.

In August, 1888, Mr. Hansard was one of five rods fishing the Grimersta. Early in the month a drought set in, and the river became so small that no fish could enter, and sport was reduced to such a standstill that it had at last to be acknowledged that angling was useless. Day by day increasing numbers of fish could be seen splashing at the mouth of the river, until at last the sea appeared alive with them; but in vain were lures of all sorts offered in the salt water.

The five rods were Messrs. R. Fergusson, A. M. Naylor, C. W. McKillop, W. G. Probyn, and H. L. Hansard. After many blank days and many trials in the sea itself, someone suggested how easy it would be to make an artificial spate. When the idea was once started, no time was lost in essaying to carry it out, and "rods" and ghillies vied with each other in working.

It must now be explained that the Grimersta is but a very short stream—barely a mile long—in which fish do not rest; it drains, however, no less than nine large lochs, all connected by streams only a few hundred yards in length. At the head of this chain is the Loch of Langabhat, which of itself is sixteen miles long by about one in breadth.

Accordingly, the five gentlemen with their five ghillies set to work and made a strong dam six feet high at the exit point of the loch nearest to the sea. When this had been satisfactorily done, the labourers turned their attentions to the

short stream flowing from Loch Langabhat, and, deepening it by about a foot, they watched the dam on the lowest loch. Inch by inch, day by day, the water rose; but as it had nine miles to come, and room to spread over five other lochs, nearly a week lapsed between the completion of the work and the rising of the water to the top of the dam. On the 21st of August, the water having nearly come up to the top, the dam was cut just before high tide, when for the following thirty-six hours the Grimersta ran a bumper to the sea, while the fish came splashing up into the nearest loch in hundreds. When the spate ended, the fish had almost all got into one loch, in which they were crowded together, not being able to get further for want of water, and it was there that the bulk of the sport was obtained.

Here is the result of the enterprise, which should indeed open the eyes of the owners of rivers flowing from lochs, and stimulate them to try similar experiments:—

From Monday, August 20th (the dam was cut on the 21st), to Saturday, the 25th, the five rods took 163 salmon and 221 sea trout. On that day Messrs. Fergusson and McKillop had to leave, but before doing so the last-named gentleman had a day of 17 fish on the 22nd, and Mr. Hansard 12 others on the same date.

On the 23rd, Mr. Naylor had 31, and Mr. Probyn 18. On the 25th Mr. Hansard had 25, and Mr. Naylor 15.

The 26th was the Sabbath.

From the 27th to the 1st of September, in the following six days, the lucky three rods that remained captured with fly only no less than 333 fish, weighing 2,056 lbs.!

On August 27th Mr. Probyn took 36.

„ „ Mr. Naylor „ 15

On August 28th Mr. Naylor „ 54.

„ „ Mr. Probyn „ 15.

On August 29th Mr. Hansard „ 27.

„ „ Mr. Naylor „ 15.

On August 30th Mr. Probyn took 18.

On August 31st Mr. Naylor „ 45.

On September 1st Mr. Hansard „ 46.

It will be seen that these fish did not run very large, the average being a little over six pounds.

In connection with this wonderful angling, it must be mentioned that there were no nets of any sort, and no poachers either, within many miles of Grimersta mouth; therefore similar experiments tried on a mainland river, whose shores bristle with bag nets, could not be expected to bring up such vast quantities of fish. Nevertheless, by this means such rivers as admitted of it could be fairly stocked, and thousands of fish, especially sea trout, would be saved from the nets of the scringers.

The cost of building an effectual dam, at all times in working order—and it must not be forgotten the Grimersta experiment was only a rough one, and that the dam there was opened by *destroying* it—will vary from fifty up to several

hundreds of pounds. All depends on the weight of water to be kept back, and on the width of the channel to be dammed, and the facilities that are offered by nature; but for an outlay of from £300 to £400 I believe most of the lochs of the west coast streams could be effectually dammed.

Numerous are the rivers flowing from lochs that could be dammed, but in my humble opinion the four streams best suited for such an experiment are the Inchard, Inver, Kirkaig, and Laxford. Their embouchures are not far apart. They belong to one owner, viz., the Duke of Sutherland, who also possesses the entire coasts into which they flow, and if augmented rents, increased sport, and larger numbers of salmon can be derived from the adoption of my idea of creating artificial spates and netting at the top of a river instead of in the sea, while allowing the whole of the fish to pass under the lures of the angler, then there are no other rivers which would so quickly show whether there was any practical utility in the scheme.

The angling of the Laxford has dwindled to a very small matter, and that of the Inver and the Kirkaig to something even smaller, and, therefore, the least improvement would be marked at once.\*

According to the Blue Books of the Fishery Board, His Grace lets to Messrs. Speedie, of Perth, for £250, the whole of the bag nets, which control and capture almost every fish that would otherwise ascend one or other of these four streams.

I can only state approximately what the angling rents now bring in and what I think they would realize if these rivers were worked on the artificial spate system, and netted on the top pools, while the rods had their chance of taking toll of the fish when coming into these rivers under such changed circumstances, *i.e.*, the abolishing of the bag nets.

The Blue Book of 1890 states that the take for that year of Messrs. Speedie's bag nets was

\* See descriptions of these rivers in Volume I.

one thousand six hundred and seventy-seven salmon, averaging twelve pounds, eight thousand and thirty-one grilse, of nearly six pounds, and five hundred and thirty-one sea trout, which may be accepted as about the usual capture. Now, had these nets not been at work, and had there been artificial spates, nearly the whole of these ten thousand fish would have distributed themselves in the rivers under discussion.

By the present system, the Inchard, Inver, and Kirkaig yield about fifty fish each to the rod, and the Laxford a hundred—a total take of two hundred and fifty fish, many of them grilse. On this basis surely it is liberal to estimate the present value of the Inver angling at £300. That of the Kirkaig is let to the lessee of the Culag Hotel at Lochinver, who charges 25s. a day for the angling of the whole river, which is of no use till the 1st of July. Roughly speaking, this means about one hundred days of angling prior to the end of the season. So the rent may be put down at £100.



for of course the hotel keeper will certainly make a profit.

Up till this year the Laxford was let, with a large extent of deer forests, to the late Duke of Westminster. It is of no use before the middle of June, and of recent years has yielded about one hundred fish a season. Let me take them at £5 a head, and call the rent £500, which probably is over the mark.

The Inchard and Loch Garbet Beg are leased to the hotel at Riconich, and from the price at which the hotel keeper lets out the angling he can hardly afford to pay more than £100 a year for it—an estimate which is also likely enough a good deal beyond the real figure. Thus we have:—

Rent for bag nets from Messrs. Speedie	£250
.. from Inver . . . . .	300
.. .. Kirkaig . . . . .	100
.. Laxford . . . . .	500
.. .. Inchard . . . . .	100
	<hr/>
	£1250

Now to make an approximate estimate of what the angling and the netting of these rivers would produce if the bag nets were taken off the coast, if artificial spates were provided, if the rivers were netted where they issued from their lochs, and the rods permitted to catch all they could.

The Inver drains Loch Assynt, which is ten miles long by fully one in breadth. It has a course of six miles, which would easily divide into three fine beats, perhaps even into four. I believe that under this proposed method of fishing the river each beat would then average two fish a day to the angler, or fifty a month, and this from the 1st of July (very likely under the altered conditions from the 1st of June) to the end of the season, on the 31st of October.

Now, there are whole regiments of anglers who would jump at paying £75 a month for that sport; and if this is a correct idea, then for five months the Inver would bring in £1,125.

To this must be added the profit cleared on the netting; and supposing operations were only carried on from Monday to Friday afternoon at six o'clock, so as to ensure a large stock of fish to Loch Assynt and for breeding purposes, I yet think it would realise a modest £200 a year clear profit.

The Kirkaig is only three miles long, but has some twenty-four pools in that distance, and therefore would divide into two beats, while the fish could be netted in the Fall Pool. It could certainly be let at £75 per rod per month for four months (it fetches £30 a month now, when there is very little sport), which would result in a return of £600; and I estimate the netting profit the same as the Inver, viz., £200, making a total of £800.

The Laxford is a more difficult river to deal with; but if it were let to a syndicate of six gentlemen, with Loch Stack included, its capabilities would be so great under the proposed method,

that it becomes a difficult matter to estimate its value. I quite think the month of June, which is now not of much account, would become a good angling month. The river and the loch could be divided into three beats for six rods, rotating each day, two on the river and two parties of two in each boat on the loch, which would then be the finest sea trout angling loch in Scotland.

Well, I have nearly a dozen friends who would each be willing to pay £250 for this angling from the 1st of July to the end of the season, and I am sure it would be easy to find plenty more. This would bring in £1,500 without any netting profit. And here the nets should be used very cautiously, as the exit from the loch would permit of almost every fish being taken. Therefore I will call the netting profit *nil*, although after a few seasons it should become of considerable value.

The Inchard I feel almost disposed to leave out of the calculation, for it is a short, rocky river in which no fish can rest. Yet they would run

into Loch Garbet Beg in largely increased numbers, especially sea trout; and doubtless the hotel keeper at Riconich would double the angling rents, and I will double the rent I have supposed he pays, and call it £200 instead of £100, and leave any netting profit out of the question. Here, then, we have the

Inver	bringing in	£1,325	as against	£300
Kirkaig	„	800	„	100
Laxford	„	1,500	„	500
Inchard	„	200	„	100
Bag nets	„	<i>nil</i>	„	250
		<hr/>		
		£3,825 as against £1,250		

which shows the enormous increase of £2,575. There would be the outlay incurred in dam and sluice making, and in the case of the Laxford the building of a suitable house for the anglers to stay in.

As to the cost of the dams, I feel pretty confident these four streams could be provided

with them for less than £1,000, as the facilities offered by Nature are great.

I am quite prepared to be laughed at and called a dreaming enthusiast. Nevertheless, I should like to be able to back my opinions, and would willingly take a lease of Messrs. Speedie's nets and the angling of these four streams at the sums at which I have estimated their present value; in the end I think the laugh would be on my side!

Other rivers that could be artificially spated, and perhaps also netted, at or near to where they flowed from their respective lochs, are the Ailort, Balgay, Borgie, Brora, Conon, Creran, Doon, Euchar, the two Gruinards, Morar, Naver, Shin and Thurso.

Of course, no netting would be done in the top pools unless all the nets capable of controlling and capturing the supply of fish had previously been leased and removed. Obviously the proprietor of a river who did not own its adjacent coasts would

have a good chance of being able to lease them, provided he paid the same rent that the tacksman did, for in nine cases out of ten the possessor of the rights of the foreshore netting would prefer to let to a gentleman and a neighbour than to a tacksman.

Again there are other rivers such as the Alness, Earn, Garry of Loch Oich, Inverie, Orchy and Teith, on which artificial spates could easily be provided, but on which the proprietors would not wish for or permit any netting of the top pool, even if it could be done. Perhaps no two of these rivers could be worked on exactly the same lines, but there can be no question that artificial spates would rescue thousands of salmonidæ from the nets of the poachers.

Likewise there is hardly a stream or a stretch of angling on any river that could not be improved by judicious deepening of the pools, or by the forming of fresh ones. Quite a small croy built out into a stream at the proper angle, and in the

right place, will usually create a run of water sufficient to wash out a pool that has been partially filled up by *débris* brought down by some unusually heavy flood.

Again, how often does one come across beautiful-looking pools where fish do not rest, but in which they might be coaxed to lie by putting in a few big stones to form a shelter, or by planting a fringe of withies on the banks, for salmon delight in shaded waters, and every angler has known cases of good catches being spoilt from trees blown or cut down.

Above all things, let a river owner instantly stop any falling in of his banks, for neglect in this matter will surely lead to a costly vindication of the old proverb of "a stitch in time," etc. Even though the first cost of arresting the trouble may appear heavy, it is best to meet it, for every month that lapses will but increase the expense. I remember a case in point where the proprietor, detecting the mischief at its beginning, had an



estimate sent him for stopping the evil; the sum named was £150. Alas! he hesitated, and then, three months later, it cost him £1,000 and the loss of one of his best pools.

If any section of a river is worked at and carefully watched and helped each season, a small expenditure will keep it in order, for two or three hard-working men, properly directed, can do a great deal. The keeper and a couple of labourers can often be spared from their duties on an estate for the bettering and safeguarding of the banks of its river, and it is penny wise and pound foolish to deny any good stretch of water such assistance, though it is often done.

Through the generous way in which Dr. H. H. Almond has worked the Kyle of Sutherland nets, the Cassley, Carron, Oykel and Shin have all been bettered. Every fisherman is aware of the great improvements wrought in the Aberdeenshire Dee; in the Deveron by the action of the proprietors in purchasing and destroying the Duke

of Fife's cruives; in the South Esk by the action of the Earl of Southesk in removing his nets from the river; in the Conon by the removal of the cruives; in the Beauly by the cessation of netting below the cruives; in the Cree by the renting of the nets at the mouth by an association; on the Border Esk by the same means; on the Ruel by the removal of the nets; and on the Tay by the removal of some of the nets, chiefly brought about by the perseverance of Mr. P. D. Malloch and the instrumentality of the Tay Syndicate.\*

It is clear, then, that rivers can be improved, even under the existing unsatisfactory laws. The difficulty is to get upper and lower proprietors to pool their interests; but I am sure if that was done, they would each get better rents or better sport than they now do.

Now, kind readers, as my fourth and last volume approaches its conclusion, it remains for

\* For fuller details see Vols. I., II., III., and "River Tay" in this Volume.

me to hope they will not have been written quite in vain. Amongst my subscribers I am proud to see the names of twenty-four owners of large and justly celebrated Scotch properties; and if these gentlemen, in conjunction with the numerous influential renters of salmon angling who have also honoured me by their support, will lose no opportunity of directing public attention to the evils of the existing Salmon Fishery Laws, then words falling from the lips of such authorities will be weightier than any coming from me, and more likely to make converts, who in their turn will make others. And thus I trust to see a sort of fishy "snowball" set rolling, which shall eventually lead to the redress of the wrongs of *salmo salar*, while at the same time reducing the highest market price to 1s. 6d. a pound in early spring.

As for anglers, they are in such ever-increasing numbers that they cannot hope to rent good fishing very cheaply; but results might easily be made

more certain for them, and we ought no longer to hear of fish having cost as much as £20 apiece! There is no form of sport that can be pursued with so much zest right into old age, as is witnessed by the doings of gentlemen like Sir Robert Menzies and the Hon. and Rev. R. Liddell, and many others. Therefore, I want to see salmon plentiful and cheap; I want to see anglers getting a fair return for the large sums they spend, and I want to see the numbers of salmon fishers increased a hundredfold, with room for them all—the more the merrier, and the better for the community at large, for I am a firm believer in the sentiments so nicely expressed by the poet Armstrong:—

"There are those who think this pastime scarce humane;

Yet in my mind (and not relentless I)

His life is pure that wears no fouler stain."

THE END.

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